

constantine
and the Christian Empire

CHARLES MATSON ODAHL

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PREFACE

During a summer vacation at Yellowstone National Park after the completion of my minor fields in Ancient History and before the start of my major field in Medieval History for a doctorate from the University of California, I spent the evenings reading the classic work of Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* and became fascinated with the person and legacy of the first Christian emperor of the late Roman world, Constantine the Great (AD 306–37). Over the next few years, I did some extensive reading in the Greek and Latin texts of the fourth- and fifth-century Church Fathers with my mentors at UCSD, and some intensive field work in Constantinian numismatics with museum curators in Europe. While teaching ancient and medieval history and classical and patristic Latin at Boise State University, and offering conference papers and publishing articles on Constantine in subsequent years, I noticed that many scholars in the field seemed to be arguing from the same old texts without having much knowledge of the geographic locations and the material culture of the Constantinian Era. As Constantine was a man who was constantly traveling across the roads of the Roman Empire from Britain to Syria, fighting significant battles at important sites along those routes, meeting with Catholic bishops for Church councils at key sites, filling the great cities of the empire with Christian basilicas, and minting coins which circulated throughout and beyond the empire, I came to the conclusion that the only authentic way to truly understand Constantine and his times was to travel with him. Therefore, I have spent the last thirty years following his itineraries across Europe and the Near East—reconnoitering the sites of his key battles at Turin, Verona, the Mulvian Bridge, Hadrianople, Byzantium and Chrysopolis; examining the remains of his building projects in York, Trier, Autun and Arles, Rome, Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Mamre, and, of course, Constantinople; and analyzing coins and artifacts from his period in the great museum collections from Dumbarton Oaks in Washington to the Istanbul Archaeological Museum below the Bosporus. I have utilized two sabbaticals, have taken leaves of absence to teach at European universities, have employed private vacations, and served as a tour guide in Britain, France, Italy, Greece, Turkey, and Israel in order to carry out these travels. Along the way, I have mastered the disciplines of topographical archaeology, numismatics, epigraphy, art history (and how to survive in east European and Near Eastern war zones), and worked with the top experts in these fields to gain the knowledge (as well as thousands of slides, coins, and artifacts) necessary to teach and write about Constantine and the fourth-century Roman world with authority. Because of my academic training and field work over several traditional historical eras, I have been able to teach about Constantine in college upper division ancient Roman, early Christian, Byzantine imperial, and medieval European history courses; in patristic Latin classes; in special senior and graduate seminars on Constantine and the Late Roman Empire; and, over the past decade, out in the field in tricennial "Classical and Christian Study Tour-Seminars" on Constantine held in Rome, Thessalonica, Nicaea, and Istanbul.

This book on *Constantine and the Christian Empire* is the result of my extensive research, travel and teaching on Constantine. It is a detailed biographical narrative which reveals how this important emperor transformed Christianity from a persecuted minority cult into an established majority religion, and changed the pagan state of classical Rome into the Christian empire of the Byzantine Era. I have used all of the ancient literary sources traditionally employed by scholars writing on this subject, but have integrated them with the material sources of the era to give a deeper and fuller portrait of the emperor and his achievements than has heretofore been attempted. I truly believe that a book about someone as important as Constantine should be written in such a manner that it is both interesting and intelligible to the educated public as well as useful and challenging to fellow scholars. Thus, I have attempted to make the book as "reader friendly" as possible. The text of the work contains twelve chapters for all readers. There is an initial chapter on the subject and the ancient sources relevant to it, and a final chapter on the legacy and modern interpretations about it. In between are ten chapters which tell the story of the late Roman world and Constantine's place in it from *ca.* 235 to 395. These twelve chapters have hopefully been written in a lucid and understandable style, and not littered with the arcane debates of scholars. Curious and intelligent people who just want a "good read" and some knowledge about their cultural heritage may stop here. The scholarly apparatus at the back of the book contains notes, a bibliography, and an index supporting the text. I have used the notes to cite the ancient sources of my information, and to refer to modern scholarship useful on particular topics; and have dealt with problems of interpretation and scholarly disputes therein. The bibliography offers listings of both the more important ancient sources and modern scholarship relevant to the book. The index, of course, lists the pages of particular topics. Students and scholars who wish to go deeper into the subject may avail themselves of the scholarly apparatus at the back of the book. Throughout the book, readers will find a total of 92 illustrations and 8 maps, which provide a visual tour of the more important Constantinian sites, monuments, and artifacts.

My research and field work in Constantinian studies has been helped by the knowledge and kindness of many scholars whom I would like to thank here: Professors Stanley Chodorow and Alden Mosshammer at UCSD for my initial studies in Constantinian texts and Church history; Dr. Irene Vaslef at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C., Professeur Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie and Mme. Marine Sibille at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, Dr. Victor Saxer at the Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, and Patricia Weaver and Antonella Bucci at the American Academy in Rome, Mr. Marcel Sigrit at the Ecole Biblique et Archéologique Française in Jerusalem, and Mr. Aykut Ozet at the Istanbul Archaeological Museum in Istanbul for archival research; curators Philip Grierson at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, R.A.G.Carson and J.P.C.Kent at the British Museum in London, Anne Robertson at the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow, Scotland, Amandre Michel at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, Wolfgang Hess at the Staatliche Münzsammlung in Munich, and Dr. Nekriman Olcay at the Istanbul Archaeological Museum for numismatic research; Professor Bruno Apollonj Ghetti in Rome, Professor Jerome Murphy-O'Connor in Jerusalem, and Professor Erdem Yúcel in Istanbul for archaeological research. My far-flung travels have been facilitated and made pleasant by the following people and institutions: by the professors in the Northwest Interinstitutional Council for Studies Abroad who have twice selected me to

teach at Bath College of Higher Education in England and at the University of Avignon in France; by Ric Delgado of Air France in Los Angeles, Penny Keys of Trans Globe Tours in Sherman Oaks, and Bob Harmon and Linda Aymon of Harmon Travel in Boise who have employed me to design and guide study tours in Europe and the Near East a half dozen times; by Walter Catini and the staff of the Columbus Hotel in Rome, and by Saim Celbeker, Remzi Erbaş and Ugur Duymayan and the staff of the Hotel And in Istanbul who have made my many sojourns at their hotels for private research trips and public tour-seminars delightful with wonderful rooms, food and services; and by Linda, Suzy, Sandra, and Charlynn Anne who have enlightened seven of my trips with their charms. Several Constantinian scholars have shared their scholarship with me and offered encouragement for my work over the past two decades, and I recognize them with gratitude: Ramsay MacMullen, Timothy Barnes, Hal Drake, Oliver Nicholson, Hans Pohlsander, Mark Smith, Judith Evans Grubbs, Maureen Tilley, Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, David Woods, and Klaus Girardet.

A number of my dear colleagues and students at Boise State University aided me in various ways while I was researching and writing this book, and I am most grateful for their kind assistance: Deans William Keppler, Robert Sims, and Warren Vinz for travel grants and released time; Department Chairs Errol Jones and Peter Buhler for departmental funds for the illustrations in the text; Charles Scheer and John Kelly of the Simplot-Micron Technology Center for photographing my Constantinian coin collection, and making prints out of my slide collection for the illustrations in the book; students Patricia Chaloupka, Jody Mabe, Teressa Huff, Dorothea Huff, Jerry Wilson, Kevin Cole, Margaret Sankey, Brandon Lambert, Diane Boleyn, Aaron Christensen, Chris Ogden, Marilyn Wylde, Joshua Jaynes, Aaron Campbell, Larry Stamps, and Kasey Reed for doing research related to my work and/or proofreading the typescript of the book. Finally, I offer my deepest thanks to three fine scholars: to Mark Smith of Albertson College of Idaho, who has done much work on Eusebius and Constantius I, for reading the first half of my typescript and making useful observations; to Hans A. Pohlsander of the State University of New York in Albany, who has done much work on Helena and the family of Constantine, for reading the whole 900-plus-page typescript and offering many valuable suggestions; and to Richard Stoneman, an excellent scholar of ancient history and the publisher of the classics titles at Routledge, for requesting me to write this book, for coming to Boise and encouraging me during its progress, and for waiting patiently for me to finish it.

Charles Matson Odahl
Beside the river in Boise

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All of the illustrations for this book have come from the author's collection of slides, prints and negatives of Constantinian sites, monuments, statues, coins, paintings, engravings, maps, etc. John Kelly and his fine staff in the Simplot-Micron Technology Center at Boise State University made the prints to fit the specifications of the author.*

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I
THE SUBJECT AND THE ANCIENT SOURCES

> The holy service in which these hands have been employed has originated in pure and genuine faith towards God.
> Constantine, *Oratio ad Coetum Sanctorum* 26

While marching from Gaul to Italy during a campaign to wrest control of Rome from an imperial usurper in the year AD 312, the emperor Constantine the Great felt the need for divine assistance against the substantial armed forces and the numerous religious rites employed by his enemy. Noting that the previous generation of emperors who had followed the traditional pagan cults and persecuted the Christian Church had come to unhappy ends, he invoked the *Deus Summus,* the "Highest God" of the universe, in prayer for aid and power in his time of trial. Believing that he had received an answer to this appeal through revelatory experiences from the God of the Christians, he decided to employ the *caelestia signa,* the "celestial symbols" of Christ, as talismanic emblems on the arms of his troops. The emperor's climactic victory at the Battle of the Mulvian Bridge on 28 October 312 convinced him that he had made the right choice for a divine patron and that he should direct his religious loyalty to this Divinity in the future.

Constantine had come to power as the son and heir of the Illyrian soldier emperor Constantius, who had served in the Tetrarchy of Diocletian (293–305). The four emperors of the First Tetrarchy had pulled the Roman world out of the chaos of political convulsions, external invasions, economic decline, and cultural disunity which had nearly destroyed the empire in the mid-third century. Constantine had served under his father's colleagues as a young man, and would adopt many of the reforms they had instituted. However, he felt that they had gone astray in persecuting the Christians of the empire; and upon taking power in 306, he restored religious freedom to the Christians in his domains. Having broken away from the religious policy of the other emperors in the Second Tetrarchy, he gradually evolved from pagan polytheism through Solar syncretism to Christian monotheism in his personal religious orientation. After his conversion experience in 312, he became a devout Christian believer, and allowed his religious confession to affect his imperial policies. He included Christian clergy in his court circle, immersed himself in Christian literature, and got involved in Church disputes. He used legislative powers to give the Catholic Church a favored position in Roman law, expended material resources to build Christian basilicas in Roman cities, and employed imperial propaganda to spread the Christian faith through Roman society. His victory in the struggle for political dominance ensured the triumph of Christianity in the contest for religious supremacy in the Roman world. Thus, through the course of the long reign of Constantine (306–37), the Christian Church was transformed from a persecuted minority cult into an established majority religion; and the pagan state of classical antiquity

evolved into the Christian empire of the Byzantine Era. The life and times, and the religious beliefs and imperial policies of the first Christian emperor are the focus of this study.

As Constantine was a generous patron of both literary productions and artistic creations, it is appropriate that a considerable body of written works and material remains are extant from antiquity for the assessment of his imperial reign and religious policies. Since many readers may not be familiar with these sources, it may be useful at the outset to identify the major literary works and material remains upon which this study is based.

Ancient Literary Sources

The ancient written works are found in a variety of genres, but are largely extant in Greek or Latin texts, the common languages of the late Roman world.[1] Two biographical studies of Constantine's career are extant from the fourth century—one in Greek and written from an ecclesiastical perspective, and the other in Latin and written from a secular perspective. The former, and more important, is conventionally called the *Vita Constantini,* but is more accurately rendered from its Greek title as *The Life of the Blessed Emperor Constantine* (composed *ca.* 336–39). It was written by Eusebius of Caesarea, a Christian theologian and Church historian who was metropolitan bishop of Palestine during most of Constantine's reign.[2] He had witnessed the sufferings of Christians during the "Great Persecution" of the pagan emperors and experienced the patronage of the Church after Constantine's conversion. Like most Christians of his era, he preferred the latter. He became acquainted with Constantine at the Council of Nicaea in 325, and there heard the emperor's personal confession of his conversion experience, and cooperated with his efforts to establish Church unity around a common creed and Easter celebration. He encountered and corresponded with Constantine on several occasions over the last dozen years of his reign, may have helped guide the empress mother Helena on her Holy Land pilgrimage, received an imperial commission to oversee the making of beautiful bibles for the churches of the emperor's new eastern capital, and gave the panegyrical oration for Constantine's tricennial festival at Constantinople in 336. During the two years he outlived Constantine, he composed his four books on the first Christian emperor's life. It is not a full biography in either the ancient or modern sense, but a conflation of two ancient literary genres. He seems to have started it as a funeral panegyric, eulogizing the dead ruler's personal virtues and imperial accomplishments; but he decided to expand it into "a documentary history of a hagiographical nature," concentrating on the emperor's religious life and policies.[3] He provided the most detailed account of Constantine's conversion experience, and summarized his subsequent support for the western Church in the early pages of the text. He then described his victory over the last pagan emperor in the east, and chronicled Constantine's public patronage for the eastern Church through the central sections of the work. He reported on the emperor's attempts to settle hierarchical and doctrinal disputes among Church leaders through the course of the story, and offered numerous examples of Constantine's personal piety, and patronage of Christianity at the expense of paganism in the later parts of the text. As in his earlier work on Church history, Eusebius incorporated many useful documents in the *Vita,* including imperial letters, edicts, and laws.[4]

However, he was sketchy on military and political issues, and left out information that might be harmful to his subject's reputation. Yet, if one keeps its limitations in mind, and remembers the author's statement that "the design of my present undertaking is to speak and write only of those circumstances which have reference to his religious life," it is a most useful source for a study on Constantine and Christianity.[5]

The other biographical study of Constantine is much shorter in length, and is entirely different in character. It was composed in Latin, and was entitled the *Origo Constantini Imperatoris—The Lineage of the Emperor Constantine* (*ca.* 340–90). The name of its author is not known, and the date of its composition is not certain.[6] It concentrated almost entirely on Constantine's political and military career, with only a few references to cultural matters. It was thus very similar to the historical epitomes popular in late antiquity; but covered only the life of Constantine and offered more details and greater accuracy than the former. The work outlined Constantine's lineage, specified his place of birth, and provided interesting details on his service under the Augustus Diocletian and the Caesar Galerius in the east while his father Constantius was serving as Caesar under the Augustus Maximian in the west. It chronicled Constantine's rise to power in Britain and Gaul and victory over Maxentius in Italy during the troubled times of the Second Tetrarchy; and then described at length the political and military struggles of Constantine with Licinius for supremacy in the east. It ended with references to the emperor's conversion to Christianity, construction of Constantinople, and final campaigns and succession plans. It contained critical comments on the persecuting emperors here and there, but maintained a positive attitude to Constantine throughout. The fact that the text stated "from Constantine to the present day all of the emperors, except Julian, have been Christians," has led some scholars to postulate a late fourth-century date of composition.[7] However, the fact that the work had more accurate information on the political and military career of Constantine than the late Latin epitomes, and contained passages found in Orosius' *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans* (*ca.* 417), has led other scholars to contend that it was originally written shortly after Constantine's death in the mid-fourth century by a pagan author, and then interpolated with a few Christian passages from Orosius in the fifth century by a Christian redactor.[8] This latter view is possible, but faces some difficulties. If a pagan author wrote the work shortly after Constantine's demise, he would have been aware of the emperor's anti-pagan legislation, spoliage of pagan temples, and death sentence against the pagan philosopher Sopater in the last few years of his reign, and probably would not have written in such a positive tone about the emperor. Also, the supposed "Christian" interpolations from Orosius contain some material that is strictly secular, e.g., Constantine's Gothic wars and the revolt of Calocaerus on Cyprus. Finally, Orosius composed his work very swiftly at the request of St. Augustine in the second decade of the next century, and drew heavily from previous Roman writers—his work was a virtual paste job from earlier literature. Thus it is possible that Orosius borrowed from the *Origo* rather than the other way around. The author might have been a Christian layman who was born and raised late in Constantine's reign, served in a military or civil career under Constantine's sons in the mid-fourth century, and then in retirement a decade or two later composed his tract in the genre of the Latin epitomes that were so popular in the late fourth century (*ca.* 380). If the author was a man who had spent his life in a secular career, he would have been more interested in political and military affairs than in the religious and cultural issues which interested a

clergyman such as Eusebius. Yet, as a Christian who had loyally served the Constantinian dynasty, he may have been unhappy with some of the negative portraits of Constantine which were beginning to appear during and after Julian's pagan reaction against the first Christian emperor. The *Origo* might thus have been a Christian layman's reaction to the pagan Latin epitomes of the late fourth century.

Regardless of the author's religious orientation and the work's date of composition, all scholars agree on its value as a source for Constantine's reign. Used along with the religious and cultural material provided in the *Vita Constantini,* the political and military matters covered in the *Origo Constantini* offer scholars a better opportunity of producing a balanced portrait of the Christian emperor's reign and policies.

Several narrative histories, some with a Christian or ecclesiastical perspective, and others with a pagan or secular viewpoint, are extant from the fourth and fifth centuries. Eusebius of Caesarea was the pioneer in the former—the genre of Church history. Caesarea was not only the Roman provincial capital of Palestine, but also a famous center of Christian learning. The speculative theologian Origen had resided there in the mid-third century, and the Christian teacher Pamphilus had compiled a great library of thousands of texts there at the end of the century. As a rising presbyter and disciple of Pamphilus, Eusebius was placed in control of the library late in the third century, and drew upon its resources to compose an *Historia Ecclesiastica*—a seven-book *Church History* in Greek that traced the rise and development of Christianity in the Roman world from the first through the third centuries (*ca.* 300). After surviving the decade long "Great Persecution" and being elected Bishop of Caesarea in 313, Eusebius expanded his history with an eighth book on the persecutions of Diocletian and Galerius, a ninth book on Maximin's persecution and Constantine's conversion (313), and a tenth book on Constantine's patronage of the Church in the west (315)—to which he later added an epilogue on the emperor's march to victory over Licinius in the east (325). These last three books are important for this study because they provide valuable background information on the troubled period when Constantine was rising to power, and contain authentic imperial documents from the early years when he was supporting the Church.[9]

Though Rufinus of Aquileia translated Eusebius' history into Latin at the end of the fourth century, it is the latter's Greek continuators of the fifth century who offer more useful data for a study on the first Christian emperor. A century after the death of Constantine, the east had long been officially Christian and was experiencing a cultural renaissance in Constantinople under Theodosius II (408–50). A university had been founded there in 425, and a commission of lawyers was drawing up a legal code of the constitutions of the Christian emperors since Constantine to take effect in 439. In this environment, several Christian authors composed continuations of Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Socrates Scholasticus, a Christian lawyer and native of Constantinople, wrote a *Church History* covering the period from Constantine's conversion to 439 (*ca.* 443). His first book was devoted to Constantine's reign. Sozomenus, another Christian lawyer and *literatus* who had migrated to the city from Palestine, wrote a *Church History* also starting with Constantine's conversion, but only carrying the story up to 425 (*ca.* 445). His first two books dealt with Constantine. Both borrowed and summarized material from Eusebius' *Vita Constantini* in their treatment of the Christian emperor. However, since Eusebius had been deeply involved in the theological debates and episcopal politics of the Arian Controversy, he had been vague or equivocal about some

of the episodes in which he had played a part. Long removed from these events, Socrates and Sozomen had nothing to hide, and included documents and information which filled in gaps left by Eusebius. As residents of Constantinople, they also provided details on the founding of the city which had not interested Eusebius. Unfortunately, a number of legends had formed around the figures of Constantine and his mother Helena in the century after their deaths, and some of this unreliable material made its way into these later histories. Theodoret, the Bishop of Cyrrhus in Syria in the mid-fifth century, also composed a *Church History* from the period of Constantine to 428 (*ca.* 448). As a theologian, who was involved in the Christological debates of his own day, he was most interested in those of the earlier century and concentrated almost entirely on the Arian heresy and ecclesiastical struggles of Constantine's reign in the first book of his history. Like his contemporaries Socrates and Sozomen, he included valuable documents in his work.[10]

The above-mentioned Church historians were all orthodox Christians, and wrote from the viewpoint of the victorious theological party. However, an *Historia Ecclesiastica* from the perspective of the losing Arian faction has survived in a later Byzantine epitome. Philostorgius, a contemporary of Socrates and Sozomen, had been raised by Arian parents in Cappadocia, and then came to the capital city in the early fifth century. There, just as his orthodox competitors were beginning their works, he completed a *Church History* covering the period from Constantine to 425 (*ca.* 433). The first two books were devoted to the reign of Constantine, and contained material favorable to the pro-Arian bishops who had gained Constantine's confidence late in his reign. Philostorgius had wide-ranging interests, and offered much information on secular matters as well. His work did not survive later Byzantine censors, but, before it was lost, the ninth-century ecclesiastical scholar Photius made a detailed summary of its contents which is still extant.[11]

Compared to the volume and value of material offered by the Church histories, there is much less available from the secular narratives of late antiquity. With the exception of the surviving portion of the *History* of Ammianus Marcellinus covering the years 353 to 378, no monumental Latin histories in the tradition of Livy or Tacitus are extant. What remain, instead, are several short Latin historical works which are known as *breviaria* or *epitomes*. They were usually written by pagans, and provide brief overviews of Roman military and political history. Aurelius Victor, a north African native, and pagan civil servant in the mid-fourth century (Governor of Pannonia Secunda under Julian, and Prefect of Rome under Theodosius I), wrote a *Liber de Caesaribus,* or *Book on the Caesars,* which summarized the reigns and achievements of Rome's emperors through the mid-fourth century (*ca.* 361). Eutropius, a pagan Roman senator and high governmental official during the same period (Secretary of State for Petitions under Valens and eastern Consul under Theodosius I), wrote a *Breviarium ab Urbe Condita,* or *Abbreviated History from the City's Founding* that covered all of Roman history up to 364 (*ca.* 369). Ruffus Festus, a consular Governor of Syria and Asia under the Valentinian dynasty, supplemented the latter with the *Breviarium Festi—The Abbreviated History of Festus,* that recounted Roman provincial conquests and foreign relations from the Republic to the late Empire (*ca.* 370). Finally, an anonymous pagan author wrote an *Epitome de Caesaribus,* or *Epitome on the Caesars,* which summarized Victor's work and expanded it to the end of the century (*ca.* 395). As pagans, these authors preferred to

emphasize Rome's secular history and military glories rather than recount its Christian conversion and cultural transformation. Thus, they largely ignored the religious aspects of Constantine's reign, and dealt instead with his military campaigns and civil policies. The epitomators were not as accurate as the *Origo Constantini* on these issues, but they set the emperor's reign in the context of Roman imperial history as a whole, and offered a secular perspective and negative judgments not found in the Church histories.[12]

A Christian version of the Latin historical epitomes was provided by Paulus Orosius in the *Historiarum adversum Paganos Libri VII,* or *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans* (*ca.* 417). He treated all of history from the Garden of Eden to the late Roman Empire, but he wrote from a Christian perspective. In his coverage of the Constantinian Era, however, he borrowed heavily from earlier sources and offered little that is not available in them.[13] The Greek tradition of secular narrative history on a grand scale as practiced by Dio Cassius and Dexippus in the third century was continued by Eunapius of Sardis, an ardent pagan who lived in western Asia Minor during the late fourth and early fifth centuries. He was entering his teens and undergoing a traditional pagan education when Julian the Apostate tried to turn the empire back to paganism in the early 360s, and was in full manhood and a practicing Sophist when Theodosius I was championing Catholicism and outlawing paganism in the 380s. He did not approve of the latter policies, and made his anger against the Christian emperors known in a *History from Dexippus* which covered Roman history from the late third to the end of the fourth century. He is reported to have written a first edition (*ca.* 390), and then came out with a second edition several years later (*ca.* 415). In both, he seems to have given a negative assessment of Constantine, recounting the tragic judicial murder of his first son Crispus and the forced suicide of his second wife Fausta, offering a bogus account of the emperor's conversion to Christianity, and criticizing his imperial and religious policies. Such a portrait of the first Christian emperor did not survive Christian censors in the later Byzantine Empire, and thus the full history of Eunapius is no longer extant. However, a few fragments of it still exist, and some parts of it were known and used by other late fourth- and fifth-century authors before its demise. The Latin author of the *Epitome de Caesaribus* seems to have borrowed Eunapius' story of the tragic ends of Crispus and Fausta, and Sozomenus knew Eunapius' false account of Constantine's conversion and felt the need to refute it in the pages of his *Church History*. The most significant borrowings were made by Zosimus, a pagan civil servant in the early Byzantine Empire. He composed an *Historia Nova,* or *New History* (*ca.* 500), which covered all of Roman imperial history, but with special emphasis on the period from the third to fifth centuries, in the Greek secular narrative tradition. Like the Latin epitomators, he was most interested in political and military affairs, and he provided much useful information for Constantine's reign on these topics. Unlike the Church historians, he was not happy with the religious conversion of the Roman world, and he offered an entirely different perspective for Constantine's policies favoring Christianity and slighting paganism. He borrowed much of the negative portrait of the first Christian emperor painted by Eunapius, and seems to have added to it in his overall assessment of Constantine.[14]

With the Eusebian *Vita Constantini* and ecclesiastical histories for religious and cultural issues, and the *Origo Constantini* and secular histories for political and military matters, modern scholars have a considerable body of ancient written sources from which they can construct an historical narrative of the Constantinian Era.

Besides such traditional biographical and narrative historical writings, there are a number of specialized literary works that offer detailed information on specific phases of Constantine's career, or on particular aspects of his policies, which can help fill in the framework offered by the former materials. These are contemporary panegyrical orations, polemical tracts, and imperial compositions.

Panegyrical orations were eulogistic speeches usually recited in an emperor's presence on festive occasions, such as an imperial visit or during an imperial anniversary in an important city. They were given by experienced rhetoricians in favor with the court, and celebrated the personal virtues and recent accomplishments of the ruler in a positive light. A codex of *XII Panegyrici Latini, Twelve Latin Panegyrics,* delivered mostly by pagan orators from Gaul, is extant from the fourth century. Four of these were offered in honor of the emperors ruling just before Constantine (289, 291, 297 and 298), and five of them were given in honor of Constantine in the early years of his reign (307, 310, 311, 313 and 321). The former celebrated the positive accomplishments of the Diocletianic First Tetrarchy—especially of the western rulers Maximian and Constantius—in bringing order back to a Roman world which had suffered a half-century of chaos. The latter chronicled the troubled times of the Galerian Second Tetrarchy, and the rise of Constantine to power out of it. They provided detailed information on his early military campaigns and offered a pagan perspective on his evolving religious beliefs not found in other sources.[15] The Trier panegyric of 313 is particularly interesting for the details it gave on Constantine's Italian campaign, and the manner in which its pagan author handled the emperor's conversion.[16]

Unfortunately, the names of most of the pagan authors of the Latin panegyrics given in the west early in the reign of Constantine are not known. This is not the case with the Christian author of the Greek *Oratio de Laudibus Constantini (The Oration in Praise of Constantine),* recited before the emperor in Constantinople on the thirtieth anniversary of his accession to power (336). Eusebius of Caesarea, by then a famous Christian theologian and renowned Church historian, was given the honor of celebrating the emperor's great deeds on his third decennial anniversary. Rather than dealing with the traditional themes of imperial *virtutes* and military *gloria,* Eusebius concentrated on the Christian piety of his subject. This Christian panegyric presented Constantine as an agent of divine revenge against the pagan persecutors, as an interpreter of the the Word of God to humanity, and as a divinely constituted ruler erecting a terrestrial imitation of the celestial commonwealth in the Roman world.[17]

There were several polemical tracts written by fourth-century Christian authors, either against pagans outside the Church or against enemies inside the Church, which provide useful material for this study. The leading exponent of the former was the Latin Christian rhetorician and apologist Lactantius.[18] Raised and educated in Roman North Africa in the late third century, he served for a time as Professor of Latin Rhetoric at Diocletian's eastern capital of Nicomedia. After the outbreak of the "Great Persecution" in the east, however, he lost his position and eventually fled to the western provinces where he wrote a seven-book defense of Christian faith and ethics against pagan beliefs and practices entitled the *Divinae Institutiones—The Divine Institutes* (*ca.* 303–13). Constantine may have met him when serving as a young prince at the eastern court, and possibly have offered him refuge after becoming an emperor in the western provinces in 306. Although Lactantius seems to have returned to the east for a time, he is reported in old age to have

become the tutor of Constantine's first son Crispus at the imperial court in Gaul. He probably resided in Trier for several years after 313 while that city was the regular imperial capital and most frequent place of sojourn for the emperor. The old rhetorician added an effusive dedication to Constantine in the final book of his *Divine Institutes;* and the new convert certainly studied this tome carefully as many of his later statements on the truth of Christianity as opposed to the fallacy of paganism can be traced to it.

It was during these years in Trier that Lactantius also wrote his famous *Liber de Mortibus Persecutorum,* or *Book on the Deaths of the Persecutors* (*ca.* 313–15). Its theme was the divine revenge inflicted on the imperial persecutors of the Christian Church. Although he briefly alluded to the sorry ends of some of the persecuting emperors of earlier days, he concentrated on the miserable deaths of the rulers who carried out the "Great Persecution" of his own age. He provided a negative perspective on the imperial reforms of Diocletian, and offered detailed data on the beginning and progression of the ten-year persecution against Christians. Constantine's early service in the east, his rise to power in the west, and his conversion experience in Italy were key episodes in the narrative, and Lactantius described him as a prince whom "God raised up…to rescind the impious and sanguinary edicts of the tyrants and provide for the welfare of humanity."[19] The emperor probably provided historical anecdotes for this work, and later employed themes from it in his own writings. Along with the *Panegyrici Latini,* the *De Mortibus Persecutorum* offers much valuable material for reconstructing the early years of Constantine's career.

Two Christian authors of the mid-fourth century wrote polemical works against the Donatist hierarchical schism of the western Church and the Arian theological controversy of the eastern Church which disrupted the reign of Constantine. Eusebius of Caesarea briefly mentioned the involvement of the emperor with a schism in the leadership of the North African Church in the first book of his *Vita Constantini,* and incorporated a few documents relevant to it in the last book of his *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Yet, the origin of the schism during the "Great Persecution," and Constantine's efforts to heal it in the years following his conversion, would largely be obscure without the work of Optatus, the Catholic Bishop of Milevis in North Africa, who wrote *Libri VII de Schismate Donatistarum,* or *Seven Books on the Schism of the Donatists* (a first edition *ca.* 365–67, and a second edition *ca.* 385). Optatus not only provided a narrative history of the dispute between the rigorist Donatist faction and the Catholic bishops of Carthage, but also attached an *Appendix* of contemporary documents to his work which included some of Constantine's letters and instructions to governmental and Church officials regarding the schism.[20]

The Arian theological controversy which raged in the eastern provinces in the later years of Constantine's reign was given extensive coverage in Eusebius' *Vita Constantini* and in the fifth-century *Historiae Ecclesiasticae*. However, a key participant in the Nicene ecumenical council and in the ecclesiastical political struggles of the period has left several polemical works in defense of his positions and in opposition to his detractors. This was the famous Greek Church father Athanasius, who attended the Council of Nicaea as a young deacon from Alexandria, and then served as bishop of that metropolis for forty-five years in the mid-fourth century. Throughout his career he maintained a strong adherence to the Nicene credal formula that Christ was "of the same essence" with God the Father, and fought against the attempts of Arians to depose him

from his see. In the second part of his *Apologia contra Arianos,* or *Defence against the Arians* (*ca.* 349), and in the early pages of his *Historia Arianorum,* or *History of the Arians* (*ca.* 357), he detailed his struggles against Arian bishops and their supporters, and his checkered relationship with Constantine. In his *Epistola de Decretis Nicaenae Synodi,* or *Letter on the Decrees of the Council of Nicaea* (*ca.* 352), he gave a biblical and theological defense of the terminology used in the Nicene Creed, and attacked the attempts of his opponents to change that language. This material adds greatly to our knowledge of the theological debates and episcopal politics of the Constantinian Period.[21]

Among the most important sources for assessing the private religious beliefs and the public religious policies of Constantine are the emperor's own writings. Numerous imperial letters, a public sermon, and various edicts and laws composed by or for Constantine have survived in their original Latin versions or in ancient Greek translations. Both Eusebius, in his *Historia Ecclesiastica,* and Optatus, in the *Appendix* to his Donatist history, preserved several of Constantine's letters to provincial officials and Church leaders concerning the hierarchical schism of the western Church. Eusebius, in his *Vita Constantini,* Socrates and Theodoret in their *Historiae Ecclesiasticae,* and Athanasius, in his anti-Arian polemics, recorded letters of the emperor to various parties involved in the theological controversy of the eastern Church. In such letters, scholars can trace Constantine's growing knowledge of the practices of the Christian Church, and his emerging theory of serving as an imperial theocrat for the Christian Divinity. In the *Vita,* Eusebius praised the emperor's assiduous study of the Bible, and his custom of delivering sermons in public settings. Attached to the end of the work is one of these imperial sermons, entitled the *Oratio ad Coetum Sanctorum,* or the "Oration to the Assembly of Saints." Probably spoken before a group of eastern Christians on a Good Friday late in his reign, it revealed Constantine's philosophical approach to and theological understanding of the Christian faith (*ca.* 325–37). At the end of the *De Mortibus Persecutorum,* Lactantius provided a Latin copy of the edict of religious toleration which Constantine got Licinius to issue at the end of the "Great Persecution"; and in the tenth book of his *Historia Ecclesiastica,* Eusebius offered a Greek translation of the same document, traditionally known as the "Edict of Milan" (313). In the same place, he also inserted copies of some of Constantine's early legislation in favor of the western Church; and then through the pages of his *Vita Constantini,* he recorded or paraphrased many of the later laws of the emperor favoring Christianity. Unfortunately, these were all given in Greek translations; but many of the original Latin constitutions of Constantine were later incorporated into the fifth-century *Codex Theodosianus* (439). Through such edicts and laws, scholars can see how Constantine established Christianity as a legal cult in the Roman Empire, made the churches legal corporations within Roman law, and elevated the Christian religion above the pagan cults in the Roman world. Employed with other ancient literary sources, Constantine's own writings offer a much clearer perspective on the Christian beliefs and religious policies of the first Christian emperor.[22]

Ancient Material Remains

The ancient material remains from the Constantinian Era are likewise found in a number of different forms, and also provide much useful information on the emperor's policies and priorities. Constantine was certainly one of the great builders in imperial history, and architectural remains from his reign are found from Britain and Gaul in the west to Thrace and Judaea in the east. Among these are a palace audience hall, a secular basilica, Christian churches, bathhouses, fortified walls and city gates. Especially important for this study are the great basilican churches Constantine and his family patronized in key cities around the empire. These magnificent edifices gave the faithful beautiful centers for communal worship and ensured the Church a public presence in imperial society. Through imperial beneficence and ecclesiastical constructions, Rome was transformed into the Apostolic See of the west, Jerusalem was rebuilt as a pilgrimage destination in the east, and Constantinople was erected as a new Christian capital on the Bosporus Strait. Visualizing the original position, size, and appearance of the ancient Constantinian churches is not very easy since most of them have fallen into ruin or been rebuilt through the centuries. Yet, there are several sources which can aid scholars in visualizing the original structures. The *Liber Pontificalis (Book of the Popes)* listed the Constantinian churches in Rome; and Church historians and various pilgrim journals, such as the *Itinerarium Egeriae, The Pilgrim Journey of St. Egeria,* described his churches in the east. Old mosaics, engravings, and frescoes often depicted the ancient edifices before they were rebuilt in modern times. And archaeology has uncovered foundations from the older structures still extant under the newer ones, and identified columns and masonry from the old buildings which have been reused in the modern churches. By collating these sources and making isometric reconstructions, the ancient Basilica of St. Peter in Rome (*ca.* 315–29), the old Holy Sepulchre complex in Jerusalem (*ca.* 325–35), and the first Church of Holy Wisdom in Constantinople (*ca.* 326–60) appear again.[23]

The victories of Roman rulers were often celebrated on triumphal monuments and their visages customarily portrayed in imperial sculptures. A number of important monuments and some sculptural remains are extant from the reigns of the persecuting emperors who preceded Constantine. Much more material of this sort is left from the long rule of the first Christian emperor. The triumphal arch erected for his victory over Maxentius in the west still stands majestically in the center of Rome (312–15). The triumphal column set up for his conquest of Licinius in the east still dominates one of the hills of Constantinople (326–30). Many sculptural representations of Constantine have survived from various places and times of his reign. The head and several pieces from the body of a colossal seated statue of the emperor, originally in a basilica of the Roman Forum, is on display in the atrium of the Palazzo dei Conservatori Museum on the Capitoline Hill. A full standing statue of the emperor from his bathhouse in Rome is now situated in the narthex of the Basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano (Illustration 1). Heads of Constantine can be examined in museums in York, Belgrade, Constantinople, and New York. Statues or mosaic portraits of his mother Helena and other members of the imperial family have survived in Trier, Rome and elsewhere. These monuments and statues help scholars assess the way the emperors wished themselves and their families to be depicted in public.[24]

More ubiquitous than monumental structures and statues were the official coins and medallions of the Roman Empire. Through the regulated minting processes of late antiquity, the emperors were easily able to use the imperial coinage as a medium of

propaganda. Coin obverses portrayed imperial visages and titles, while the frequently changed reverses announced military victories, civic programs, and religious beliefs. Beautifully designed and stamped in high relief, Roman coins and medallions were disseminated across the empire with the intention that the populace would note the figures and read the inscriptions thereon—not just exchange them in economic transactions. Late Roman coinage can be studied in museums from America to the Near East, with very fine collections at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C., the British Museum in London, the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, and the Staatliche Münzsammlung in Munich. Many of the coin types of late antiquity are also available on the open market, and can be purchased for private collections. In terms of the religious issue, the coins of the tetrarchic rulers prior to Constantine depicted a narrowing of focus to just a few key divinities of the Olympian pantheon, while those of Constantine revealed the gradual disappearance of the pagan gods and the appearance of Christian motifs.[25]

A type of written material related to monuments and coins is the corpus of inscriptions which has survived from late antiquity. Neither purely literary nor technically artistic, inscriptions were written messages impressed on material remains. Inscribed on monuments and stamped on coins, they explained something about the purpose of the structures or the iconography of the coins they decorated. On official monuments and imperial coinage, the inscriptions were often in Latin. In more private dedications, such as gravestones, they were sometimes in Greek. The study of inscriptions on monuments, and the types of abbreviations employed in them, is called epigraphy.[26] Some inscriptions are found in their original position on structures still extant, such as the dedicatory inscription on the triumphal Arch of Constantine in Rome. Others are found on blocks of stone in museums from edifices no longer in existence, such as one commemorating the restoration of a Roman bathhouse by Helena in the Vatican Museum. The wording of the former provides information on the attitude of the pagan Roman Senate to Constantine shortly after his conversion, while the titulature of the latter offers data on when and where his mother was residing in Rome. Some inscriptions contain information which help researchers gage the expansion of Christianity in the empire. The study of coin inscriptions is a part of the discipline of numismatics. The inscription GLORIA EXERCITUS, "Glory of the Army," impressed around the motif of soldiers standing beside a war standard carrying the Christ monogram on the reverse of a Constantinian coin, advertises the prowess of the Roman army fighting under the aegis of Christian talismanic symbols. Inscriptions and coin motifs sometimes corroborate literary sources, and sometimes provide valuable information not found in written accounts.

A few references in other ancient literary works, some Byzantine chronicles, and a few medieval and Renaissance maps, engravings, and paintings fill out the list of sources for the Constantinian Era.[27] By mastering this substantial body of material, and by identifying and collating the reliable data contained therein, a scholar can attempt to compose an historical biography on the imperial reign and religious policies of the first Christian emperor of the Roman world. Such is the aim of this book.

II
THE IMPERIAL CRISIS AND THE ILLYRIAN EMPERORS

> Illyricum was indeed the homeland of all these men, and, although they were little versed in culture, they were sufficiently imbued with the hardships of country and military life to be the best men for the state.
>
> Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 39. 26

Flavius Constantinus was born in the ancient town of *Naissus* about a hundred miles south of the lower Danube River in a Roman province long known as *Moesia Superior*—now the city of Niş in the state of Serbia. As the empire had recently lost its Dacian territories above the Danube, the western area of Moesia was being reorganized into a military frontier province known as *Dacia Ripensis* around the time of the future emperor's birth. Located along a military road, and close to the junction of the Nišava and Morava Rivers, tributaries of the Danube, Naissus was in a strategic area of the eastern European provinces of the Roman Empire.[1]

Several ancient inscriptions indicate that the birthday of Constantine was celebrated on 27 February. However, the year of his birth has to be deduced from various statements concerning his age at the beginning and end of his public career. Lactantius, in his *De Mortibus Persecutorum* (*ca.* 315), and the emperor, in his own "Edict to the People of the Eastern Provinces" (325), characterized Constantine as "a young man" or "a mere youth" when he had served as a military tribune in the east during the early years of the "Great Persecution" (303–5). The terminology used here was not very precise, and was probably intended to absolve Constantine from any blame for the persecution. Lactantius again, and some early pagan panegyrists, referred to Constantine as "the young man" and "the youthful emperor" during the early years of his reign in the west (307–10). The language here was likewise ambiguous, and was standard panegyrical rhetoric comparing the youthful vigor of a new emperor with the mature counsel of an older colleague. Thus, deducing the year of Constantine's birth from these polemical and panegyrical references is problematical.[2]

Eusebius, who got to know the emperor fairly well in his last years, reported at the beginning of the *Vita Constantini* that Constantine began his imperial reign at the age at which Alexander the Great had died, and lived twice as long as had the Macedonian conqueror. At the end of the same work, he wrote that Constantine ruled for almost thirty-two years, and lived twice that long. The Church historians Socrates and Sozomenus followed Eusebius, and specified that Constantine died shortly after his sixty-fourth birthday; while the Latin epitomators also placed the emperor in his early to mid-sixties at the time of his demise.[3] The imperial biographer and the narrative sources are

thus more precise than the earlier evidence, and are in agreement that Constantine had a lifespan of about sixty-four years. From what is known of his early life and career, this latter evidence appears more reliable. Therefore, Constantine seems to have been born at Naissus in late February of *ca.* 273, midway through the reign of the Illyrian soldier emperor Aurelian (270–75).[4]

The father of Constantine was a young soldier named Flavius Constantius. Like his first son, he was a native of the eastern portion of that broad belt of imperial provinces beneath the central Danube generically known as Illyricum. This region was providing Rome with many of its best soldiers, army commanders, and even emperors in the troubled times of the late third century. The government of the empire was no longer the exclusive preserve of aristocrats. Men of humble social standing, but with military and administrative talents, could rise through the army to the highest positions in the Roman state. Constantius was such a man. He had already served as a member of the *Protectores,* the officer training corps and private guards of the emperor, during the successful campaign of Aurelian to reconquer secessionist areas in the Syrian east (271–73). Shortly thereafter he became an officer with the rank of *tribunus,* in the Roman army, and within a decade would rise to the position of *praeses,* governor, of the important province of Dalmatia at the western end of Illyricum.[5]

The mother of Constantine was a lovely young lady named Helena. She had been born into a family of low social standing at Drepanum in northern Bithynia—Yalova in Turkey today. She was serving as a *stabularia,* a maid, in one of the tavern-hostels that dotted the Roman roads of the eastern provinces when Constantius met her at the beginning of his military career (*ca.* 268–72). Although a few sources present her as the concubine of Constantius, more reliable ones call her *uxor* or *coniunx,* his “spouse.” As their union took place before his promotion to tribune and corresponding rise in social standing, the marriage was probably legal, and the legitimacy of their son not in doubt.[6]

Twenty years after the birth of their son, Constantius would be offered the position of *Caesar,* junior emperor, of the west. He would have to put aside his lowly wife from his early years and accept the daughter of the *Augustus,* the senior emperor, as a bride more befitting his new imperial status. Although Constantius would be separated from his first son for a dozen years thereafter, he saw to it that Constantine was trained for an imperial role; and eventually brought back to his side, and set up for succession to his throne. Although Helena never remarried and lived in obscurity for many years, she remained close to her only son; and when Constantine became an emperor, he brought his mother back into public life, and ultimately raised her to the rank of *Augusta,* or empress of the Roman world. Much less information is available on Constantius and Helena than on their more famous son. Yet, Constantius appears to have been a man of martial courage, administrative talent, and mild disposition; and Helena a woman of personal dignity, mystical piety, and emotional passion. Constantine was fortunate in the parents who gave him life, and seems to have inherited the best qualities of each—qualities needed in a man who would rise to leadership of a Roman state battered by the manifold storms of the third-century imperial crisis.

The parents of Constantine grew up in the midst of the fifty-year period (*ca.* 235–85) that has been described by ancient writers and modern historians alike as a terrible time of crisis in which the Roman Empire appeared to be collapsing from political convulsions, external invasions, economic decline, and cultural disunity.[7]

The political convulsions began in 235 when peaceful succession to the imperial throne in Rome was superseded by military revolutions in the provinces, and resulted in a rapid turnover of emperors through the next fifty years.

The earliest emperors had been heirs of the ruling *nobilitas* of republican Rome, and had achieved power as the victors in the factional strife of the late Republic. Caesar Augustus and his Julio-Claudian successors (31 BC-AD 68) had ruled in Rome as the *Princeps,* or "First Man," of the state backed by a Senate largely filled with their supporters among the Romano-Italian nobility, and had governed the empire as the *Imperator,* or "Commander-in-Chief," of the armies supported by legions largely recruited from Roman citizens in the west loyal to their clan. They had been able to designate successors from blood heirs to receive constitutional grants of consular, tribunician, pontifical, and imperial powers from the Roman Senate and People peacefully for almost a century. The foibles of Nero had brought down the first imperial dynasty, and a short civil war had raised up the second, Vespasian and his two Flavian sons (69–96). The demise of the second son Domitian without a male heir had not been followed by civil war, but by senatorial selection of and legionary acquiescence in a distinguished old senator, Nerva, as the next princeps. Nerva and his Ulpian-Antonine successors (96–192) had often lacked direct male heirs of the blood, and thus had adopted distant relatives or trusted officials as sons, and had the Senate designate and the legions acclaim them as their imperial successors. This system had given Rome some of its best emperors—the conquering commander Trajan (98–117), the traveling consolidator Hadrian (117–38), the revered father figure Antoninus Pius (138–61), and the fighting philosopher Marcus Aurelius (161–80).[8]

The principatial system of emperorship and the peaceful succession of emperors from Augustus through the Antonines had coincided with the 200-year period of the *pax Romana* in which the Roman Empire had reached the apex of its political power, military sway, economic prosperity, and cultural achievements. However, changes in the fabric of imperial society had been occurring during these years which would undercut the political stability of the empire. The old republican nobility from which the early emperors and senatorial governing class had largely come had gradually been dying off through the first century. At first, Romans of equestrian status and gentry from Italian towns, and later, Italian colonists and Romanized subjects from the provinces, had replaced them. The Flavian Dynasty of the late first century had sprung from Italic equestrian stock; and some of the Ulpian-Antonine emperors of the second century had been descendants of Romano-Italian colonists from Spain and southern Gaul. The governors-general who commanded the legions and governed the provinces under the emperors had increasingly been chosen from the new nobility as well. While this new governing class was fully Romanized and loyal to the empire, it was less "Roman" and not so attached to republican institutions as had been the earlier *nobilitas*. In such a situation, the role and power of the emperors increased while the use and authority of republican institutions decreased. Also, as client kingdoms had been converted to provinces and provinces had become Romanized through this period, Roman citizenship had been extended ever wider through the populace of the empire. After Hadrian had pulled back from some of the far-flung conquests of Trajan in the Near East and consolidated the frontiers of the empire, it had become more common to recruit legions from among the new provincial citizen class and station the armies in the regions where

they had been raised. Vigorous emperors who toured the provinces and led the legions in person could command the loyalty of such troops; but less active rulers who remained in Rome and enjoyed the pleasures of the capital could lose their support. The civil war of 68–69 had shown that emperors could be made elsewhere than in Rome, and that imperial power ultimately rested upon control of the legions. A governor-general ruling one of the larger of the empire's forty-eight provinces and controlling several of its thirty legions had a strong power base which could be used against a weak emperor or during a political crisis. Such was the situation from which the Severans rose. After the son of Marcus Aurelius had been killed in a palace plot at the end of 192, and the Praetorian Guards had killed his successor and auctioned off the imperial title to the highest bidder at Rome in early 193, several regional army commanders claimed the emperorship with the backing of their legions. Septimius Severus, the Governor of Upper Pannonia, made a successful march on Rome in the summer of 193, and got his claim recognized by the Senate; but he had to spend the next four years fighting civil wars before his dynasty was firmly in power, and peace was finally restored. The first years of Septimius were a portent of the troubled times of the next century and the fragile peace of his dynasty was merely the calm before that terrible storm. Although he professed loyalty to the Antonine emperors under whom he had served, his style of imperial rule was entirely different. Septimius was a native of North Africa, of mixed Italian and Berber blood, and had risen through the military before becoming emperor; and his wife Julia Domna was a native of Syria, and daughter of the hereditary high priest of the eastern sun god Elagabal at Emesa. The old traditions of republican Rome held little meaning for this couple and their heirs. Septimius Severus knew that his power depended on the support of the soldiers, and he acted accordingly: he cashiered the old Praetorian Guard, and set up a new and larger one from troops loyal to his dynasty; he increased the number of the legions, and raised the pay and eased the conditions of service for the soldiers therein; and he ruled as a "military monarch" through strong praetorian prefects rather than as a republican *princeps* through the Roman Senate. He kept his armies busy and the borders defended with campaigns in Mesopotamia against Parthians and in Britain against Picts. New men of low birth and provincial origin rose in imperial service under the viligant Septimius (193–211) and his brutal son Caracalla (211–17). The later emperors of this line were grandchildren of Julia Domna's sister, Julia Maesa. She and her daughters helped keep the dynasty in power by generosity to the army. Yet, the young emperors whom they propped up gradually lost credit with the military hierarchy. Elagabalus (218–22) brought the popular eastern sun cult (over which he was high priest) to Rome and built a magnificent temple for it on the Palatine Hill; but he ruled as a bejewelled transvestite and scandalized Rome with his licentious revels and homosexual liaisons. He was replaced by his young cousin Severus Alexander (222–35), a diligent and philosophic-minded ruler who gave the empire its last peaceful reign for half a century. Unfortunately, his lackluster performance against the new Persian state in the east, belated attention to the rising German menace in the north, and disciplinary measures in the army, led to his overthrow by the legions in 235. The republican principle of a constitutional emperorship, and the dynastic traditions of the early empire thereafter fell by the wayside as legionary groups in the field, and the Praetorian Guards or Senate in Rome, frequently proclaimed new emperors and regularly engulfed the state in civil wars over the next fifty years.[9]

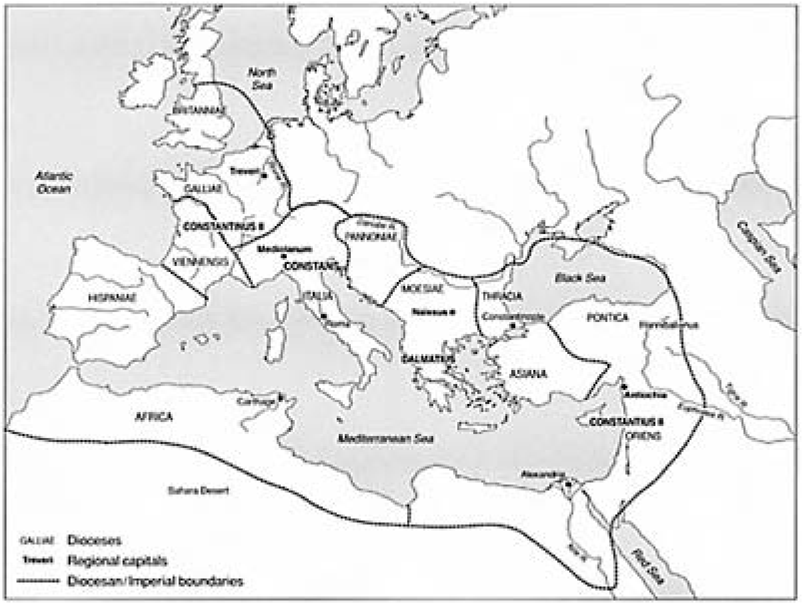
The political aspect of the imperial crisis has been called the "succession problem," and the half-century in which it occurred has been named "the era of the barracks emperors," or "the age of the soldier emperors." Ambitious governors and army commanders had the power bases from which to revolt against the central government; and regional armies with the hope for donatives, a sense of loyalty to their commanders, or the wish for an emperor on an endangered frontier, were willing to support the revolts. The Senate or the Praetorian Guards sometimes put forward their own candidates in opposition, but more often than not were forced to accept the army leaders who could make good their claims in war. Aurelius Victor wrote that

> henceforth while…[the emperors] preferred to fight among themselves, they threw the Roman state as it were into a steep decline, and good men and bad men, noble and ignoble, and even many of barbarian background were put into power indiscriminately.[10]

Eutropius succinctly recorded how the crisis began as "Maximinus [Thrax emerged] from the military ranks and was the first to come to power solely as the choice of the soldiers, since the authority of the Senate had played no role and he himself was not a senator." Other ancient sources described the Thracian's low birth, and specified that the Pannonian and Moesian legions had proclaimed him emperor against Severus Alexander without senatorial approval.[11] Maximin and his son ruled for only a few years (235–38) before revolts broke out against them in several quarters. African provincials proclaimed their proconsular governor Gordian and his son as emperors. When they died before reaching Rome, the Senate named Balbinus and Pupienus emperors in an effort to defend Italy against an attack from the Maximini who were leading their legions across the Alps. The latter were killed; but the senatorial candidates were soon done away with as a grandson of the African Proconsul, Gordian III, came to power out of the chaos and was able to rule for a few years (238–44). While on campaign against the Persians, Gordian was overthrown by the eastern legions who proclaimed the Praetorian Prefect, Philip the Arab, emperor. A native of the Traconitis region east of Galilee who had risen through the ranks of imperial service, Philip made peace with the Persians, returned to Rome, and got himself and his son recognized as emperors by the Senate. During their joint reign (244–49), Philip and his son staged magnificent games in Rome for the millennial anniversary of the founding of the city, and fought against the barbarian Carpi on the Danube. However, restive legions in that area soon rose against Philip. Decius, a senator from Pannonia whom the emperor had sent to quell the revolt, accepted the acclamation of the soldiers, and led them back to Italy where he defeated and killed the Philipi. Decius and his son then had to rush back to the Danube front in an effort to stop a massive invasion of barbarian Goths. They had some initial successes; but were caught in a trap at Abrittus in Lower Moesia, and were slaughtered in a Danubian marsh heroically defending the imperial frontier after a short reign of about two years (249–51). Chaos ensued as numerous pretenders claimed and fought for the emperorship for several years thereafter. Finally, Valerian (253–60) and his son Gallienus (253–68) were able to become rulers with the support of the Alpine legions and the Senate. But external invasions by foreign foes and breakaway movements by internal usurpers brought the empire to the nadir of its fortunes during their reigns.[12]

Until the third century, the Roman Empire had largely kept its enemies at bay and successfully defended its chosen frontiers. Senatorial generals of the late Republic, such as Pompey and Caesar, had established a patchwork of imperial territories around the Mediterranean Basin, including land provinces in Hispania, Gallia, Dalmatia, Macedonia and Achaea, Asia, Bithynia and Cilicia, Syria, Africa and Numidia, and island provinces on Cyprus, Creta, Sicilia, and Corsica-Sardinia. Augustus and his imperial successors to the end of the first century had filled in this patchwork by conquering new provinces in Britannia off the Gallic coast, in Upper and Lower Germania along the Rhine, in Raetia and Noricum in the Alps, and through Pannonia, Illyricum, Moesia and Thracia below the Danube; and changing client states to provinces in Galatia, Cappadocia, Aegyptus, and Mauretania. The high tide of imperial expansion had been reached in the early second century under Trajan with the conquest of Dacia above the lower Danube in eastern Europe, and portions of Mesopotamia and Arabia in the Near East. Hadrian had pulled back from some of the latter areas, and consolidated the imperial frontiers along the Rhine River in western Europe, above the Danube River to the Black Sea in eastern Europe, to the end of Anatolia, the Syrian Desert and the Euphrates River in the Near East, and down to the Sahara Desert in North Africa. From the Atlantic coasts of Britain and Spain to the deserts of Syria and Judaea, and from the North Sea to North Africa, the Roman Empire had extended nearly 3,000 miles in width and nearly 2,000 miles in depth through over forty provinces spread out around the Mediterranean Basin in Europe, western Asia and North Africa.[13] Hadrian and his successors through the early Severans had maintained a "preclusive defense" strategy. About thirty legions of approximately 6,000 soldiers each had been deployed in legionary *castra* (camps) behind stone walls and earthen palisades along the imperial perimeter to defend the empire from external attacks and control trade across its frontiers during the second and early third centuries. This preclusive strategy which was based on the discipline and the strength of the Roman foot soldier had worked fairly well as long as the neighbors of the empire were fairly stationary and politically divided. However, changes in the composition and quantity of Rome's external enemies in the early third century led to greater pressures upon its frontiers and to more frequent invasions into its territories than its limited military resources and static defensive strategy were able to handle.[14]

Massive external invasions were a closely related aspect of the third-century crisis, and, added to the already unstable political environment, produced military anarchy in "the age of the soldier emperors." Instead of the small Germanic tribes across the Rhine-Danube frontiers in Europe or the feudalized Parthian kingdom in the Near East which had faced the earlier



Map 1 The Roman Empire and its enemies in the mid-third century.

Roman Empire, much larger and more united barbarian coalitions in Europe and a more centralized and aggressive Persian state in the east were arising in the early decades of the third century to menace the later Roman world. In the North Sea, Saxon pirates were developing fleets with which they could raid the shores of the Gallic and British provinces. Along the lower Rhine, several Germanic tribes were coalescing into the Franci and began to threaten the northern German and Gallic provinces. Farther south along the upper Rhine, other Germanic tribes united into the Alamanni and began to menace southern Gaul and Italy. Old enemies like the Marcomanni and Quadi were still active on the upper Danube, but were being pressed by new peoples from Scandinavia and the east European plains. Goths from the Baltic Sea were moving down through eastern Europe and threatening to invade Roman Dacia and cross the lower Danube. Sarmatians from the Iranian plains were approaching the same area, and along with the Goths and other east German barbarians, were menacing the Balkan and Anatolian provinces of the empire. In the Near East, Roman campaigns from Trajan to Septimius Severus against the Parthians had so weakened and divided that kingdom that its monarchy was overthrown in the early third century. In 224, Ardashir of the House of Sassan, claiming spiritual descent from the great Achaemenid Empire of the sixth to fourth centuries BC, established a revived Persian Empire at Ctesiphon in Mesopotamia, and laid claim to Rome’s eastern provinces. With a more centralized government, a more mobile field army, and a revived national Zoroastrian religion, Sassanid Persia was a serious danger to Syria and other Roman provinces in the east. And later in the century,

nomadic raiders from the desert began to press against the Roman green belt of cities and farms across North Africa.

Thus, a continuous band of formidable enemies was arising all along the perimeter of the third century Roman Empire. With a greater use of horse soldiers and more mobility by these new enemies as opposed to the greater reliance on foot soldiers and slower movement by the Roman legions, and with imperial frontier garrisons often weakened for internal civil wars among the barracks emperors, the external invaders were often able to breach Roman boundaries and ravage provincial territories far and wide through the middle decades of the third century (Map 1).

The new Persian threat in the east and the rising German menace in the north had already been noticed at the end of the Severan period, and young Alexander had led campaigns in both areas before being overthrown by Maximin Thrax in 235. Maximin spent all of his short reign on the northern frontiers fighting Germans on the upper Rhine near Mainz and Sarmatians on the upper Danube in Pannonia. During the civil wars and political chaos of the next few years, Shapur I succeeded his father on the Persian throne in 241 and attacked key border towns in eastern Syria. Thus, young Gordian III was forced to campaign against Persia until he was overthrown by Philip the Arab in 244. Philip concluded the campaign by negotiation before returning to Rome. But he had to march to Moesia where Germanic Quadi and Thracian Carpi were raiding across the lower Danube. He repulsed these barbarians, and returned to Rome to stage victory celebrations and the Millennial Games for the city in 248. The celebrations were short-lived, however, as internal usurpations and external invasions soon ended the reign of Philip, and wreaked havoc upon the Roman world. Decius, who had been sent north to quell a military revolt, accepted the acclamation of the soldiers, pulled troops away from the Danube front, and marched back into Italy where he defeated and overthrew Philip in 249. The Goths took advantage of the situation and invaded Roman territories in Dacia, Moesia and Thrace. Decius and his son were killed two years later trying to stop their advance. Various regional commanders attempted to defeat barbarian raids while simultaneously fighting for the imperial throne for several years to come. By the time Valerian and Gallienus became emperors in 253, frontiers were being breached all around the empire. Franks were crossing the lower Rhine and raiding northern Gaul; Alamanni were fording the upper Rhine, and threatening southern Gaul, Raetia, and Italy; Goths were again ravaging Dacia, crossing the lower Danube, and raiding deep into Macedonia and Achaea; other Goths, along with Borani and Heruli, were taking ship on the Black Sea, and launching raids into Asia Minor; and the Persians were crossing the Syrian Desert and attacking Roman Antioch. Gallienus was left to fight Germans in the west while Valerian launched a campaign against Persians in the east. Gallienus won a few battles in Gaul and Illyricum, and Valerian began pushing Shapur I (242–70) back to Mesopotamia. Then, disaster struck. A plague weakened the eastern army, forcing Valerian to negotiate for peace. While doing so, he was taken hostage and dragged off to ignominious captivity at Ctesiphon in 260. He spent his last years as a human footstool upon whose back Shapur mounted his horse. When he wore out, he was flayed and his skin mounted on a Persian palace wall—gigantic relief sculptures cut into imposing rock walls in the near eastern desert record this ultimate Roman disgrace. Meanwhile, the Franks advanced through Gaul into northern Spain where they ravaged Tarraco; the Alamanni invaded down into central Italy where they threatened Rome; the Goths again

ravaged Dacia and the provinces south of the Danube; and the Persians marched to Roman Antioch and sacked the city. In the west, Postumus, a commander on the Rhine, induced soldiers and subjects in Gaul, Britain, and Spain to accept him as emperor in an independent *Imperium Galliarum,* an "Empire of the Gauls," which no longer recognized the authority of Rome (260–73). In the east, Odenathus and Zenobia began styling themselves as King and Queen of *Palmyra,* a trading city in the Syrian Desert which was leading provincial resistance to Persia, and eventually set up an independent kingdom which controlled the provinces of the eastern Mediterranean Basin (260–72). Poor Gallienus was too busy fighting off usurpers and barbarians in the west to attempt a campaign to free or avenge his father. In the later years of his reign, this beseiged ruler was barely able to hold onto Italy, southern Gaul, Raetia, Pannonia, Dalmatia, and North Africa (260–68). It is no wonder that Eutropius commented in his summary of this period that "at that time,…the Roman Empire had almost been destroyed."[15]

Economic decline resulted from the chaos of the times, and was another aspect of the third-century imperial crisis. Towns on the frontiers of the empire were often devastated, and cities in the interior were sometimes raided. The Latin Christian historian Orosius wrote in his early fifth-century narrative that "there still exist throughout the different provinces small and poor settlements in the ruins of great cities, preserving signs of their misfortunes…, even among which in Hispania we point out our Tarraco in consolation of its recent misery." The Greek pagan historian Zosimus wrote in his history at the end of antiquity that "there was not one province in the Roman Empire which was left undamaged, and [the barbarians] took nearly every unwalled city and most of the fortified ones as well"; and he named many eastern cities, such as Byzantium, Chalcedon, Nicomedia, Nicaea, Ephesus, and Antioch, which suffered from the civil wars and external invasions of the crisis period. With Roman and enemy armies moving across and fighting upon imperial territories, trade routes were disrupted and farm lands devastated. It became difficult for merchants to transport their products across the empire safely, and for farmers to harvest their crops in the provinces peacefully. Cultivated lands in rural frontier regions were often deserted by their inhabitants who sought safety in urban interior areas.[16]

The economic decline of the third-century Roman world is reflected in the debased imperial coinage extant from this era. In the early empire the Romans had minted coins in gold, silver, and bronze denominations, with the silver *denarius* as the basic coin of the realm for tax collections and public disbursements. From Augustus to the Antonines, the denarius had largely been kept up to standard in weight and fineness. Augustus had maintained an army of twenty-five legions at the end of his reign, and paid his soldiers 225 denarii per year. The Severans raised the number of legions to thirty-four, and increased legionary pay to 750 denarii per year. The combination of an inflexible tax system, loss of key mines in frontier districts, and increasing military demands forced emperors from the late second century onward to debase the weight and fine metal content of the silver coinage to produce a larger supply of available currency. In the early third century, Caracalla issued a new silver coin, the *antoninianus,* which was supposedly a double denarius, but only weighed one and a half as much as the old coin. It was discontinued for a few years but was brought back in mass quantities under the soldier emperors during the crisis years. It was debased again and again until it became a base metal coin with only a light washing of silver by the end of the reign of Gallienus. After

minimal use, the silver began to wear off and people could tell it weighed less and did not have the metal content or monetary value of the earlier coinage. Shopkeepers and merchants charged higher prices for their goods while workers and soldiers demanded higher wages for their services. Inflation resulted and spiralled out of control through much of the rest of the third century. Since even higher pay and frequent donatives in the debased coins did not meet the living costs of the soldiers, the emperors could no longer deduct the cost of supplies from military pay as had been done in earlier and more stable times. The government was forced to give the troops free distributions of rations, uniforms, and arms under a system known as the *annona militaris* (military provisions). The Praetorian Prefects as quartermasters-general oversaw the collection of the supplies necessary to provision the army as taxes in kind from the provinces. Yet, because of the military anarchy of the mid-third century, such requisitions often pressed unevenly upon distressed parts of the empire. Aurelius Victor commented on how the agents of the prefects were often brutal and venal in their tasks, and how their actions harmed the farmers from whom they were collecting produce.[17]

If these political, military, and economic evils were not enough to destroy the Roman world, a major plague spread through its cities in the mid-third century, and caused a serious decline in population just when all available manpower was needed for the struggle against the enemies of imperial order. In such conditions, wrote Aurelius Victor, "unbearable anxieties and spiritual despair" arose among the subjects of the empire. Echoing Victor, some modern scholars have labeled the third century "an age of anxiety," and have seen the cultural disunity of the period as another aspect of the third-century crisis.[18]

Through the peaceful and prosperous times of the *pax Romana,* the citizens and subjects of the Roman Empire had taken pride in being part of "the immense majesty of the Roman peace." Pliny the Elder, a Latin scholar of the mid-first century, and Aelius Aristides, a Greek orator of the mid-second century, had both referred to the safety and ease of travel throughout the Roman world, and had praised the shining cities in its provinces. The emperors had generously endowed key cities with amphitheaters, theaters, temples, aqueducts and baths through which the amenities of imperial life could be enjoyed by their subjects, while urban elites had lavishly provided sacred sites with religious festivals through which the blessings of the times could be celebrated by their citizens. In such conditions, a general pride in and cultural consensus around the Greco-Roman civilization of the Roman Empire had predominated. Native tongues had given way to Greek and Latin as the common languages of the empire; regional styles of art had been submerged in classical motifs in the public structures of the cities; and national deities had been syncretized with Olympian gods in the pagan worship of the provinces. Few inhabitants of the Roman world had been reluctant to offer worship to Jupiter and the state gods and obeisance to the ruling Caesars and their deified predecessors for the benefits which imperial rule had provided.[19]

However, the unsettled conditions of the third-century crisis could not but help undermine the political loyalty of some provincial regions to a central government which seemed impotent, and erode the cultural confidence of many imperial subjects in a civilization which seemed decrepit. Certainly, the secession of the Celtic regions of the west into the Gallic Empire of Postumus and of the Semitic areas of the east into the Palmyrene Empire of Zenobia in the 260s had much to do with the political opportunism

of their leaders and the defensive needs of their areas. Yet, the political secessions of these regions might not have had the temporary successes which they did if they had not been buttressed by the cultural dissaffection of their peoples. Postumus and his successors in the west seem to have benefited from a "Celtic Renaissance" in language, religion, and the arts which gave that breakaway state some sense of unity against Rome, and made its leaders reluctant to attempt a conquest of the central empire (260–73). After the death of her husband who had fought loyally for Rome, Zenobia of Palmyra was able to gain control of Rome's eastern provinces and rule the east as a "new Cleopatra" under the patronage of the great Semitic gods of the region (267–72). Although these secession movements would be crushed and the provinces they controlled reconquered, their ephemeral existence was indicative of the divisive forces undermining the cultural consensus of the Roman Empire in the third century.[20]

One of the more important of these divisive cultural forces was the rising religious disaffection evident among the imperial populace of this era. Traditional Roman beliefs held that performance of the proper rituals to the tutelary gods of the state insured victory in war -and prosperity in peace.[21] The wealthy decurial class of the provincial cities had customarily served the temples and held the priesthoods of paganism, and paid for the religious festivals which attracted the common people to public worship of the gods. During the peaceful and prosperous era of the early empire, the provincial elites had had the material resources to pay for the upkeep of the temples, and to provide for the varied festivities associated with them. However, the military chaos and economic dislocations of the third-century crisis were undermining the economic basis of the pagan cults, and making it difficult for the urban aristocracy to keep up the temples or put on the festivals. Moreover, literary sources report the destruction of numerous temples—like the great shrine of Artemis/Diana at Ephesus by the Goths in 263. The anarchy of the times may have led the pagan populace to question the efficacy of polytheistic deities with control over only limited parcels of nature. Such may be one of the causes for the decline in dedications to most of the gods witnessed in the epigraphic evidence during the second half of the third century.[22]

In such an environment, enthusiasm for the old cults seems to have waned, and people began looking elsewhere for religious fulfillment. Some turned to mystical philosophy in an attempt to escape from the chaos of the material world. Plotinus, a Neoplatonic philosopher who lectured in Rome at the court of Emperor Gallienus, taught that through physical abnegation, intellectual exercise, and psychic meditation a person could turn within his soul and obtain mystical union and perfect peace with the One, the first principle and spiritual deity who existed beyond space and time but from whom all creation had been generated. While not rejecting the material world as evil, the Neoplatonic system obviously placed more emphasis on the health of the individual soul than upon the stability of public society. Others turned to religious syncretism in an attempt to find a *Deus Summus,* a "Highest God" who could restore order to a chaotic world. The *One* of the Neoplatonists, the *Logos* or divine Reason of the Stoics, *Jupiter* of the Olympians, *Mithras* of the mystery cults, or *Sol* the generic Sun god, could each be identified alone or all be assimilated together as the embodiment of the "Supreme Divinity" whose many powers had customarily been delegated to a variety of nature gods. While narrowing the focus of public devotions, such syncretism was still built on the soft sands of pagan mythology, and did not meet the increasing private desires for

salvation from a finite material life into an eternal spiritual afterlife.[23] Yet, as some thinkers of the crisis era were working on a refocusing of pagan polytheism, other imperial citizens were moving away from the old cults towards a new cult which seemed better able to meet personal religious needs—Christianity.

Christianity had begun as an eschatological reform movement in first-century Roman Palestine when Jesus had proclaimed "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near."[24] According to the canonical Gospel accounts of his career, Jesus seems to have sensed a unique sonship to the Jewish God, and felt a special calling to fulfill Old Testament messianic prophecies. As the "Teacher of Righteousness" and "Light of the World," he had taught a radical ethic of love toward God and humanity, and proclaimed authoritative interpretations of the Mosaic Law. As the "Good Shepherd" and "Suffering Servant," he had carried out a ministry of healing amidst the divine flock and tendered his life in atonement for the sins of humanity. As the "Son of Man" and "Son of God," he had predicted his return to judge the temporal world and foretold his role to inaugurate an eternal Kingdom. His challenges to the authorities and popularity among the masses had led to his condemnation for blasphemy by the Jewish establishment and crucifixion for treason by the Roman government in the spring of AD 30.[25]

As some of the followers of Jesus had supposedly found an empty tomb and encountered a risen Lord, his disciples had regrouped in Jerusalem, hoping that their Master was indeed the promised Messiah *(Christos),* and had determined to carry on his work through an earthly Church *(Ecclesia)* until his return in glory at Judgment Day. Energized by a faith in the resurrection of their Lord, and inspired by a belief in the power of the Holy Spirit, missionaries had spread out around the Roman world to proclaim the "good news" of Christian salvation and to gather disciples for the coming Kingdom. In the guise of a legal Jewish sect, and under the cover of Roman governmental protection, a network of Christian congregations had been established in many cities of the Greek east and in a few towns of Latin Italy within a generation. The Christian refusal to participate in the Zealot revolt against Rome in 66, the Roman destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70, and the Jewish rejection of Christian messianic claims had resulted in the emergence of the Christian Church as a new and separate religious cult by the end of the first century.[26]

Even though definitively rejected by rabbinic Judaism and legally condemned by Roman authorities, the Christian movement had continued its geographic expansion during the next century, with important regional communities emerging in Egypt, Africa, Gaul, and Spain. Tertullian, a leader in the church at Carthage, had been able to boast to the Roman authorities in Severan Africa that "We are a new people, but we have filled up everything that is yours: cities, islands, forts, towns, markets, military camps, tribes, councils, the palace, the senate, the forum; we have left to you only the temples." Tertullian had grossly exaggerated the number of his fellow *fideles;* yet, he had correctly indicated that Christianity was no longer just a cult of the lower classes as in its earlier decades, but that its members could be found throughout the ranks of imperial society in the early Severan period. The Church had by then developed a cohesive organizational structure with its hierarchy of *episcopoi* (bishops), who traced their succession back to the Apostles, and oversaw the doctrine and practices of the assemblies of Christians in the major cities of the empire. The bishops were assisted locally by *presbyteroi* (priests) for teaching and liturgical duties, and *diacones* (deacons) for charitable and

administrative work; and they often communicated with one another by letter, or gathered in regional synods, to work out differences. The Church had established a coherent ritual system with a common body of "holy scriptures" and "rules of faith" (most of the books of the New Testament and early credal statements), and similar worship services and communal meals on Sundays in its urban congregations. Some differences in liturgical practices needed to be harmonized, and definitive statements of Christian theology still needed to be formulated; yet, compared to the loose structure of the pagan cults, and the amorphous welter of pagan rites, Christianity had emerged as a tight-knit and distinctive cult by the end of the second century.[27]

When the storms of the imperial crisis broke upon the Roman Empire in the third century, Christianity was still a religion of small numbers and little importance in society. However, it had several features which helped it both to attract converts from and to make enemies within the pagan populace of the Roman world.[28]

As an illicit minority cult, Christians had long been forced to hold their meetings in private homes. Wealthier members of local congregations donated houses to the bishops of their cities, and these *domus ecclesiae* (houses of the church) were remodeled inside for the needs of liturgical gatherings, communal meals, catechetical instruction, and personal counseling, etc. Such modest meeting places did not entail the immense financial and material outlays required for the pagan temples and festivals. The material resources of Christian congregations were rather focused on charitable activities—subsidizing their poor members when alive, and burying their deceased members for the afterlife. Christian churches had early institutionalized the love ethic of Jesus, and collected money and goods from their members into a communal fund which was overseen by the bishops and deacons. This fund was used to care for widows, orphans, the poor, the financially "shipwrecked," and to feed confessors imprisoned for their faith during persecutions. Churches which were flourishing in one area often aided churches which were suffering in another area of the empire; and it was a common practice for local churches to provide housing to Christians visiting from other provinces. The communal fund had also been used from early times to purchase land outside cities, and dig underground catacombs where the Christian dead could be buried. The massive catacomb networks around Rome testify to this practice, and to the Christian belief in the eventual resurrection of the dead. From the late second century onward, the catacombs were decorated with scenes from the Bible and images symbolic of the life to come—Jesus as the Good Shepherd leading his flock to peace, the harvest of souls at judgment, the messianic banquet in heaven, etc. (Ill. 2). The loving care Christians offered to their living and deceased brethren could not but help impress the pagans, who had not devised such organized charitable activities either through the Roman government or in the pagan cults. Thus, when the good times of the *pax Romana* disappeared, and people became distressed and living became difficult in the third-century anarchy, the charity of the Church in this earthly life and the promise of a resurrection in a heavenly afterlife were strong attractions to disillusioned pagans.[29]

The exclusive claims of Christian theology and the pacific tenets of Christian morality, however, resulted in a reluctance on the part of Christians to participate fully in public life or to serve willingly in the Roman army. While ancient philosophers were willing to include the pagan cults in their systems, and devotees of Olympian deities, native rituals, and mystery cults accepted the validity of varied beliefs, Christians claimed that their

God was the only true Deity and refused to recognize the verity of the other gods. They did not feel that they could pray to the pagan gods—much less to the deified emperors—for the welfare of the empire; nor did they feel comfortable attending the pagan festivals and games which were a customary part of public life. They labeled such activities idolatry—the worship of false gods. Early Christians also interpreted the love ethic and pacific admonitions of Jesus as binding regulations for their lives. Since the Master had commanded the loving of enemies, the turning of the cheek, and the sheathing of the sword, they considered the profession of the soldier incompatible with



Ill. 2 Wall painting of Christ as the "Good Shepherd" in the catacombs of St. Domitilla (Rome, third century).

the confession of Christ. Regulations of the Roman Church in the early third century recorded by the presbyter Hippolytus in *The Apostolic Tradition* (*ca.* 217) forbade membership to imperial officials or soldiers; and two tracts of the Christian teacher Tertullian at Carthage *De Idololatria* (*ca.* 198–203) and *De Corona Militis* (*ca.* 211) offered detailed reasoning why the "sons of peace" should not be involved in the affairs of war—the Christian Church was the *castra lucis* ("the camp of light") and the Roman army the *castra tenebrarum* ("the camp of darkness") as far as the Church Fathers were concerned.[30] Christian faithful seem to have refused military service up through much of the third century; and when pagan soldiers were converted to the faith, they were instructed to avoid the idolatry of camp rites and the homicide of battle service, or to flee the military, if they wished to remain Christians in good standing. Church apologists, like

Justin Martyr at Rome (*ca.* 155), Tertullian at Carthage (*ca.* 197), and Origen at Caesarea (*ca.* 248), tried to explain to the imperial authorities that such beliefs and practices were not subversive. They pointed out that Jesus had indicated that taxes could be paid to Caesar; and that the apostles Paul and Peter had admonished Christians to "obey the governing authorities," and to pray for those in power. They argued that Christians were good citizens whose sincere prayers, honorable lives, and pacific ethics aided the maintenance of the *pax Romana*. They claimed that their God had placed the emperors in power to restrain humanity from sin and to wield their swords against malefactors. They reasoned that as long as the emperors ruled fairly and did not try to force Christians to worship false gods or to forsake their ethics, they could honor them as agents of the divine dispensation and pray for their welfare. They warned, however, that if the emperors tried to force Christians to abjure their God, and to commit sins, then the Church must regard them as the "purple beasts" of John's *Apocalypse,* as servants of the "Great Dragon, the primeval serpent, who is the Devil and Satan," and consign them to divine revenge.[31] Such attitudes and practices did not endear Christians to the soldier emperors, who needed to marshal the human and material resources of the state against the enemies of the Roman order.[32] Therefore, as the anarchy and anxiety of the imperial crisis increased, the frequency and ferocity of the persecutions against the Christian Church escalated.

Though Nero had killed some Christians as scapegoats for a major fire in mid-first-century Rome (including the Apostles Peter and Paul), and Domitian may have persecuted some Christians for refusing to participate in the emperor cult in Rome and Asia at the end of the first century,[33] an official imperial policy against the faith had only arisen in the early second century. In response to questions from the Bithynian governor Pliny on how to handle the "depraved and immoderate *superstitio*" of the Christians which seemed to be undermining the worship of the pagan gods and the veneration of the emperors, Trajan had ruled that confession of Christianity could be punished by the death penalty (*ca.* 110–12).[34] However, due to the positive temper of the times and the small number of Christians, this policy had not been applied consistently. A few Christian leaders, like Ignatius of Antioch (*ca.* 107) and Justin Martyr at Rome (165), had been put to death in the capital by imperial orders; and a few regional Christian groups, like those at Lugdunum in Gaul (177) and at Scillium in North Africa (180), had been persecuted by provincial governors.[35] More often than not, these limited persecutions had been ordered to appease pagan mobs during a temporary crisis, for as Tertullian commented in his *Apologeticum:*

> If the Tiber floods above the walls or if the Nile does not flow into the fields, if the sky stands still or if the earth moves, if there is a famine or if a plague, the cry immediately rings out "Christians to the Lion!"
>
> (Ill. 3)[36]

Such early local and occasional persecutions were replaced by more widespread and more regular repressions in the third century as pagan intellectuals and the emperors themselves concluded that Christians were a subversive



Ill. 3 A Byzantine illuminated manuscript showing St. Ignatius of Antioch being devoured by lions in the Roman Colosseum in the early second century.

group which threatened the established order. They were members of a *religio illicita,* an “illicit cult” which did not have legal sanction to exist in the Roman Empire. They were *atheists* whose refusal to worship the Greco-Roman pantheon of deities endangered the “peace of the gods” upon which the welfare of society depended. They were guilty of *laesa maiestas,* “an attack on the majesty” of the rulers by asserting that Christ, not the emperor, was their true lord, and that heaven, not the empire, was their true home. And they were *unpatriotic* in their reluctance to accept magisterial positions or to serve in the Roman legions. Celsus, a pagan philosopher of the late second century, made charges like these in a literary discourse against the Christians entitled *The True Doctrine.* Origen, a Christian theologian of the early third century, attempted to refute the arguments of Celsus and justify Christian practices in a literary response, *Contra Celsum.* But his plea that Christians be treated as an army of pious priests praying to the true God for the welfare of the empire did not win over the “barracks emperors,” who needed loyal citizens to man their legions and fight the barbarians wreaking havoc across Roman imperial territories.[37]

The early Severans had issued an empire-wide decree against conversion to Christianity in order to slow the spread of the subversive cult; and pagan governors in major cities had enforced this with the arresting and killing of numerous Christians, among whom were the famous martyrs Leonidas and Potamiaena at Alexandria and Perpetua and Felicitas at Carthage (202–13). The eastern origins and syncretistic leanings of the later Severans had given the Church a temporary reprieve. But as the imperial

crisis was beginning, the soldier emperor Maximin Thrax tried to deprive the faithful of their leaders, ordering the arrest and exile or death of key bishops and presbyters, such as Pontianus and Hippolytus at Rome (235–38). The deepening crisis of the Roman world and the developing strength of the Church during the next decade made the soldier emperors who rose to power in the middle of the third century determined to drive Christians back to worship of the tutelary gods of the state. Decius required public sacrifice to the Olympian gods and deified emperors before civic magistrates by all citizens of the empire on pain of death. Fabius of Rome, Babylas of Antioch, and Alexander of Jerusalem were among the episcopal martyrs of this persecution (249–51); and the great Church theologian and apologist Origen was so badly beaten by his jailors at Caesarea that he died shortly afterwards. Gallus, the immediate successor of Decius, continued the persecution for his short reign (251–53). After Valerian gained control of the imperial government with his son Gallienus, he systematized the measures and increased the severity of the attacks against the Church. He ordered imperial officials to force all Christian clergy and leading Christian laity to sacrifice publicly, and to forbid Christian worship services and burial rites. Bishop Cyprian of Carthage was martyred, and Bishop Dionysius of Alexandria was incessantly harried for refusing to comply (257–60). Thus, as the Roman Empire reached the nadir of its fortunes amidst the third-century crisis, the burden of repressive religious policies was added to the political, military, and economic problems already afflicting it.[38]

These were the problems and this was the era in which the parents of Constantine had been raised (*ca.* 248–68).[39] His father Constantius was just coming to manhood and ready for military service as the troubled reign of Gallienus was ending. Yet already before the demise of that ruler, reforms were being implemented which would make it possible for Illyrian peasants like Constantius to rise swiftly to high army commands, and to ascend ultimately to the imperial office and pull the empire back from the abyss.

With the humiliating capture of Valerian by the Persians, the secession of the northwestern provinces into the Gallic Empire, and the increasing independence of the southeastern provinces under the Palmyrenes, Gallienus was forced to make several changes in imperial policies which would help him hold onto the central area of the empire he thereafter ruled alone (260–68). Even before the Persian debacle, he had started to build a mobile field force of cavalry units in northern Italy which could protect the core of the empire, and react swiftly to military emergencies on the Rhine and Danube frontiers. He recruited tough Illyrian fighters for this force, and offered swift promotions to those who proved loyal and effective. This was the origin of the *Protectores,* a mobile horse guard and officer training corps concentrated around the emperor which provided a swift and powerful striking force against both internal usurpers and external enemies. He also removed the old requirement of senatorial status for top military commands and provincial governorships, allowing low-born but talented professional soldiers to take these positions. He was able to employ his more diversified army to keep the Gallic Empire at bay in the west, to repress military usurpations and barbarian invasions from the north, and to bring aid to cities still being harassed by Goths and Heruli in eastern Europe over the next few years. He also reversed the religious policy of his father, immediately issuing proclamations rescinding the repression of Christians, and rescripts allowing the bishops to reclaim Church property and to hold worship services without molestation. Gallienus was not offering an official endorsement

of Christianity; but he probably hoped that Christians would more fervently pray for and more willingly give service to a state which was not persecuting them. His hope was realized as ancient sources record many Christians serving in governmental and military positions in the last decades of the third century. Meanwhile, Gallienus continued to honor the traditional Olympian divinities of the state in public festivals and on imperial coins in order to obtain the "peace of the gods." He may, however, have been moving toward *Sol* as the "Highest Deity" and imperial patron in his last years since it is reported that he ordered the erection of a colossal statue of himself in a chariot arrayed as the Sun on top of the Esquiline Hill in Rome. His failure to reconquer lost territories, improve the economy, or stop the barbarian invasions, and a not entirely deserved reputation for luxury and lethargy, resulted in a coup by army officers who killed Gallienus after fifteen years of rule (268).[40]

Claudius Gothicus (268–70), an energetic and respected Illyrian soldier who had risen to the position of commander of the Protectors, was acclaimed emperor by his troops in northern Italy, and was quickly accepted by the legions at large and by the Senate in Rome. He was the first of the Illyrian soldier emperors who would begin to reverse the fortunes of the Roman Empire and lay the foundations for the Roman recovery under Diocletian and Constantine. He began his reign by employing his mobile forces to beat back a transalpine invasion of Germanic Alamanni in northern Italy. After a short stay in Rome, he then led a large imperial army into the Balkans to face Gothic hordes who had crossed the Danube late in the reign of Gallienus, He defeated some of them at Doberus in Macedonia, and smashed the rest in a great battle at Naissus in Moesia. Unfortunately, he died of the plague in the summer of 270 before being able to deal with the eastern empire of Zenobia or the western empire of Postumus. However, he had restored confidence in the power of Roman arms once again, and had opened up routes to those breakaway states by his Italian and Balkan victories.[41]

After a reign of a few months by a brother of Claudius, another Illyrian soldier who had commanded the Protectors, Aurelian, was acclaimed emperor by the legions (270–75). While marching back to Rome, he had to stop an invasion of east German Vandals in Pannonia, and defeat south German Alamannic and Juthungan hordes in northern Italy (270–71). After initiating some important reforms in the capital, he marched eastward with a large imperial army for war against the Palmyrene Empire of Zenobia, which had recently declared independence from Rome and conquered the areas from Syria to Egypt. With the use of light cavalry, heavy infantry, and siege equipment, Aurelian overcame the Palmyrene forces in open field battles near Antioch and Emesa, and in two sieges of the fortress city of Palmyra (272–73). In the aftermath of these great eastern victories, he marched across Europe and defeated the new leader of the Gallic Empire, Tetricus, at Chalons (273). On his return to Rome in the following year, these victories were celebrated in a magnificent triumph, with the captives Zenobia and Tetricus walking before the chariot of Aurelian, and the victorious emperor saluted as the *Restitutor Orbis* ("Restorer of the World").

While defending the northern frontiers from barbarians, and reconquering the lost eastern and western provinces from breakaway regimes, Aurelian was also enacting reforms to bring some stability back to the Roman world. Since several barbarian groups had crossed the Alps and caused panic in the capital city in recent years, Aurelian ordered the construction of a massive defensive wall around imperial Rome early in his reign.

With the approval of the Senate and participation by civilian construction gangs, much progress had been made when he returned for his triumphs. The wall ran for eighteen kilometers around the fourteen districts of the city, was twelve feet thick and twenty feet high, and had eighteen gates and numerous military bastions along its length. It served Rome well for the next 130 years, and is still impressive in its majestic ruins today (Ill. 4). The Trajanic province of Dacia above the lower Danube had recently been inundated by barbarians and was increasingly difficult to defend. So, Aurelian withdrew the two legions and the remnant of Roman provincials living above the river, and resettled them in two new provinces carved out of and set between the two Moesian provinces beneath the river—a northern one situated on the right bank of the Danube as the military province of *Dacia Ripensis,* and a southern one stretching down to the Adriatic as the civilian province of *Dacia* (later named *Dacia Mediterranea*). He probably began this retrenchment to a more defensible Danubian frontier while marching east against Zenobia in late 271, and completed it while returning west after his initial eastern victories in early 273 when Constantine was born in the new northern military province at Naissus. The physical strength and personal discipline of this Illyrian soldier emperor were legendary, and through leadership and discipline Aurelian restored an efficiency and a confidence to the Roman army which it had not known for some time. After putting down a revolt of corrupt mint workers in Rome early in his reign, Aurelian initiated a reform of the coinage in his later years. The debased antoniniani were widened in flan size



Ill. 4 View of the Porta San Sebastiano and the Aurelian Wall on the south side of Imperial Rome (271–75).

and increased in silver content (274). The reverse motifs of the reformed coins also emphasized the patronage of the Sun god for Aurelian and his empire. Sol was often depicted stepping upon the enemies of the empire under the inscription ORIENS AUG—presumably referring to the victorious emperor rising to power from the east with the patronage of the great sun god assisting him (Ill. 5). The mother of Aurelian was rumored to have been a priestess of the Sun in Illyricum where Sol and his helper Mithras were particularly popular. Aurelian claimed to have had an apparition from the Sun during an important battle at Emesa against Zenobia, and dedicated his victories to *Sol Invictus* (the Unconquered Sun). He built a massive temple to the Sun in the heart of Rome, and decorated it lavishly with spoils from the east. Through his coin motifs, building projects, and other propaganda, he seems to have been attempting to focus pagan worship upon the Sun god as a "Highest Deity" within Roman paganism. It is reported that he was planning a persecution against the Christians as part of his religious reforms; but he was cut down by some military officers who mistakenly feared he was going to arrest them (early 275). Eutropius judged that Aurelian was the kind of ferocious and feared emperor who was needed to restore some discipline and courage to the devastated empire of the third century;



Ill. 5 Reformed antoninianus of Aurelian with obverse depicting the emperor in a radiate crown, and reverse showing Sol Invictus crushing imperial enemies (274–75).

but he did not see him as the type of thoughtful and respected leader able to effect a lasting reformation. He was probably correct.[42]

Soldiers and civilians alike were shocked at the assassination of the great Aurelian. There was a confused interregnum for several months until an old senator named Tacitus and then his brother Florian were each recognized as emperors for a few months in the winter of 275–76. However, the eastern armies eventually proclaimed Probus, another tough Illyrian soldier who had retaken Egypt for Aurelian, and he soon gained wide support and ruled for six years (276–82). In an effort to slow down the swift demise of

emperors, Probus punished the murderers of Aurelian and arranged for his heroic mentor to be deified. He continued the practice of promoting talented Illyrian soldiers to high commands in the military and over the provinces—Diocletian and Constantius are both mentioned as Illyrians who received training and preferment under Probus. He also continued to honor Sol on the coins and medallions of his reign as had Aurelian. Unfortunately, his delayed succession to the throne and long presence in the east had allowed Franks and other Germans to wreak havoc in Gaul, and Saxons to raid in Britain. Probus had to spend much of his reign driving Germans back across the Rhine and putting down insurrections in Anatolia. He was successful in these campaigns. Yet, instead of just reacting to crises as they arose, Probus began programs to protect endangered frontiers from external invasions, and to restore devastated areas within the provinces. He was probably the emperor who began to renovate old bases and to construct new forts along the eastern and southern shores of Britain and across the channel on the Gallic coast as a defensive system against Saxon raiders—these new, heavily walled *castella* became the famous "Forts of the Saxon Shore." He also used his armies for building drainage projects to restore cities and for planting vines to expand agriculture in Gaul, Pannonia, and Moesia. Some troops were not happy with these civilian duties, and encouraged the Praetorian Prefect to accept imperial acclamation in the summer of 282. Probus was killed by soldiers sympathetic to the revolution at Sirmium while preparing to march against his disloyal prefect.[43]

The new emperor, Carus (282–83), was not an Illyrian, but, as a respected soldier and administrator, he was able to gain the assent of the rest of the legions. Already sixty years old and wishing to found a dynasty, he named his two grown sons Carinus (282–85) and Numerian (282–84) as Caesars to assist him in the governance of the empire. He left the former to guard the Rhine frontier in the west while he took the latter with him to wage war against Persia in the east. With a dynastic dispute distracting Persia for many years after the death of Shapur (272), the Roman army invaded Mesopotamia, defeated the Persian forces, and took the great cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon on both banks of the Tigris River. The disgrace of Valerian seemed to have been avenged. Yet, before a decision could be made about going farther, a storm arose and Carus was reported to have been killed by a thunderbolt which set his tent aflame in late 283. His unpopular heirs were saluted as joint Augusti at opposite ends of the empire. Carinus was a good soldier, but was gaining a reputation as a brutal and licentious tyrant in the west. Numerian was a pacific and poetic young man with little taste for war in the east. He was easily persuaded by the Praetorian Prefect Aper to lead the eastern army back into Roman territory. But on the long march from Mesopotamia into Anatolia, the young emperor died under suspicious circumstances. The prefect and some loyal guards tried to hide his death by confining the imperial body to a litter, and giving out commands in the name of Numerian. Apparently Aper, who had married into the family of Carus, hoped to carry on this ruse until he reached an area where he might have enough support to become co-emperor with Carinus. Such was not to be the outcome of his plot.

By the autumn of 284, the eastern army was approaching Nicomedia in northern Bithynia. Holding high commands in this army and in key posts across the empire were Illyrian soldiers who had been rising through the imperial hierarchy since the days of Gallienus. They were undoubtedly proud of the victories which had been won and of the reforms which had been begun by their native emperors Claudius, Aurelian, and Probus.

Although they had respected the military prowess of Carus, few of them cared much for his sons, and many of them may have been unhappy with the loss of the imperial throne to a Gallic dynasty. The leader of the Illyrians in the eastern army was a tough and sagacious Dalmatian named Diocles. He had fought in the eastern campaigns of Aurelian and the western wars of Probus. He had served as a general in the provinces, and was commander of the *Protectores* on the Persian campaign. As it became clear to him and his supporters in the army that Numerian was seriously disabled or dead, and that Aper was attempting to hide this from them in hopes of gaining the emperorship, Diocles and his allies decided to act decisively to take the imperial office. They drove the Praetorian Guards away from the imperial litter, and discovered the stiff and stinking corpse of Numerian. They arrested Aper and charged him with having plotted to kill the son of Carus. A council of senior military officers was convened, and they determined to condemn Aper and to recommend Diocles before a general assembly of the military. On 20 November 284, the Roman army of the east gathered on the slope of a great hill outside of Nicomedia. They heard their generals convict Aper for his crime, and recommend Diocles for the throne. The soldiers raised their swords and standards, and unanimously acclaimed the Illyrian commander as their new *Imperator*. Diocles accepted the purple robe of an emperor. He raised his sword to the light of the sun, and disclaimed any part in the death of Numerian. He thereupon plunged his blade into the condemned prefect, killing the helpless Aper on the spot. In this dramatic moment and manner, Diocletian—as he was thereafter known—became the next Illyrian soldier emperor. He led his troops westward over the winter months, and met the army of Carinus in battle along the Margus (Morava) River in the Balkans in the spring of 285. Carinus died at the hands of his own men, and the western army joined with the eastern soldiers to acclaim Diocletian the *Augustus* of the Roman Empire.[44]

The elevation of Diocletian to the imperial throne by bloodshed and civil war might have presaged just another violent and ephemeral reign amidst the chaos of the third-century imperial crisis. However, this was not the case as his long and largely successful rule marked the beginning of a recovery in the fortunes of the Roman world. Known for his practical wisdom, Diocletian early gained the respect of other tough and patriotic Illyrian peasants who had risen through the ranks with him, and who would serve him loyally as he devised manifold reforms for the many problems facing the Roman Empire. One such man was Flavius Constantius, the father of Constantine. He was slightly younger than Diocles; but he had followed his older Illyrian comrade into the Protectors, and fought with him against Goths on the Danube, against Zenobia in Syria, and against Germans in Gaul. They had both received high commissions in the Roman army; and while Diocletian was commanding the imperial Protectors in the eastern Persian campaign, Constantius was serving as governor of Dalmatia in the western Illyrian region. When the contest with Carinus came, Constantius sided with Diocletian and held key troops in central Europe loyal to his military comrade and fellow countryman. Over the next few years Diocletian would reward Constantius and other loyal Illyrians by bringing them into his government and by making them co-emperors in his new order. Aurelius Victor commented that “Illyricum was indeed the homeland of all these men, and, although they were little versed in culture, they were sufficiently imbued with the hardships of country and military life to be the best men for the state.”[45]

As the fortunes of Constantius rose with those of Diocletian, so would the prospects of his son Constantine. Conceived with his tavern-maid bride back in the reign of Aurelian, the son of Constantius was about twelve years old as his friend became emperor. By this time, Constantine had developed a close bond with his mother Helena as his father had often been away on military campaigns. Yet, the young Illyrian lad was probably beginning to marvel at the stories of his father's adventures, to understand the importance of his father's position, and to dream of following in his father's footsteps. Within a decade his dreams would become reality as Constantine left his adolescence and entered the military under the command of his father's colleagues.

III
THE FIRST TETRARCHY AND THE CAESAR'S SON

> Diocletian turned the world upside down…, but nevertheless he ruled most successfully as long as he did not stain his hands with the blood of the righteous.
>
> Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum* 7 and 9

During the epochal reign of Diocletian (284–305), Constantius would be delegated a share of imperial power, and be elevated to the rank of *Caesar* in the western half of the Roman Empire. He would play a central role in the new order established by Diocletian. Constantine would reach manhood in these years, and, as the son of the western Caesar, would gain valuable knowledge about the imperial government and give valorous service in the Roman military under the tutelage of the eastern emperors.

While rising through the ranks of the Roman army, Diocletian had served on many frontiers and in numerous provinces, and had become acutely aware of the problems afflicting the Roman world in the third century. He had participated in the civil wars of military commanders to obtain the imperial throne. He had fought in the defensive battles of Roman troops to drive back enemy invasions. He had traversed devastated farmlands, visited sacked cities, and handled the debased coins of the period. And he had become troubled by the cultural diversity and religious disaffection arising in the empire. However, he had also witnessed the tactical experiments and partial reforms of his soldier-emperor predecessors. When he obtained the imperial office, he was determined to build upon these precedents; and during the course of his long reign, he gradually introduced a series of reforms which he hoped would end the crisis of the Roman Empire (Ill. 6).[1]

Two of the most urgent problems facing Diocletian were the continuing menace of internal usurpers and the constant pressure of barbarian invasions. A single emperor was quite vulnerable before this double threat to imperial stability. Diocletian early recognized that he would need a loyal colleague with imperial power if the besieged state were to have any lasting peace. Lacking a male heir, he quickly turned to a trusted Illyrian officer named



Ill. 6 Marble head of Diocletian with the close-cut Illyrian soldier's beard, and the imperial civic crown (dating from early in his reign at Nicomedia).

Maximian whom he formally adopted as a son and officially named as a Caesar at Milan in the summer of 285. An internal usurpation forced him to elevate Maximian to the status of a brother emperor and co-Augustus in the following spring. Diocletian early took the more Romanized name of Gaius Aurelius Valerius Diocletianus; and his adopted colleague accepted the more formal designation of Marcus Aurelius Valerius Maximianus. The new emperors were conservative in religious beliefs, and wished to establish their rule on a firmer foundation than military acclamation. Therefore, early in their joint reign, Jupiter was adopted as the heavenly father and protector of Diocletian, and Hercules was named as the divine father and guardian of Maximian, with the former taking the cognomen of *Jovius* and the latter that of *Herculius* to indicate their relationships with their divine patrons. As Jupiter was the supreme deity and regulator of cosmic order, so Diocletian as his "son" would be the senior emperor and director of imperial policy. As Hercules was the heroic offspring and instrument of divine will, so Maximian as his "son" would be a helper emperor and executor of imperial plans. Imperial coinage displayed this imperial theology as gold issues for Diocletian often

carried a reverse motif of Jupiter wielding a thunderbolt and scepter in an inscription IOVI CONSERVAT AUGG ("To Jupiter the Protector of



Ill. 7 Antoninianus of Maximian with radiate bust and imperial titulature on the obverse, and the patron deities of Diocletian and Maximian facing each other on the reverse under the inscription IOV ET HERCU CONSER AUGG—"To Jupiter and Hercules, Protectors of the Augusti" (Antioch, 286–93).

the Augusti"); while gold issues for Maximian frequently depicted a reverse image of Hercules carrying a club in an inscription HERCULI CONSERVAT ("to Hercules the Preserver"); and common antoniniani for both Augusti had a reverse motif of Jupiter and Hercules facing one another with the inscription IOV ET HERCU CONSER AUGG ("To Jupiter and Hercules, Protectors of the Augusti"). This divinely sanctioned Dyarchy was thus presented as a team of brother emperors planning and laboring together to stem chaos and restore order in the Roman world (Ill. 7).[2]

Military campaigns waged individually and jointly would be the focus of their activities over the next few years. In the summer of 285 Diocletian marched east under the Danube in order to fight Sarmatians and confront Persians along the eastern frontiers, while Maximian marched up into Gaul to put down internal brigands and push back German invaders on the western frontiers of the empire. Diocletian was very successful in these early endeavors. He defeated a Sarmatian attack on the lower Danube in the autumn of 285, and this victory gave relief to that area for several years. He spent the following winter establishing Nicomedia as his regional capital city. Located in northern Bithynia, it was ideally situated between the endangered frontiers of the Danube in eastern Europe and the Euphrates in the Near East; and it was also conveniently situated amidst the rich Greek cities and on the key trade routes of the eastern provinces. During the summer of 286, he made a tour in force through Syria and northern Palestine,

intimidating the Persians to seek peace with the Roman Empire. After wintering in Thrace, he came back to Syria in early 287 to receive Persian ambassadors sent by Bahram II (276–93). The Persian monarch had put down the internal revolt which had greatly aided the Roman invasion under Carus, but he needed a breathing space to consolidate his power at home. He was therefore willing to accept the terms laid down by Diocletian for peace: the cession of Mesopotamia as a province and of Armenia as a client kingdom to Rome. After this great diplomatic victory, Diocletian began work on reorganizing the defenses of the eastern frontier, and installed Tiridates III as the client king of Armenia. By late 287, the eastern frontiers were secure enough for Diocletian to return to the west in order to hold an imperial war conference and plan joint military operations with his brother emperor. Maximian had likewise had some early military successes in Gaul and on the Rhine frontier; but he had also suffered a serious setback. During the summer of 285, he defeated and settled wandering bands of peasants and brigands known as the *Bagaudae* who had been attacking cities, farms, and forts in Gaul. In the following autumn and winter, he moved against some north German tribes on the lower Rhine; and put the general Carausius in control of the channel fleet and fort system with instructions to beat back Saxon and Frankish pirates in the coastal waters. While the emperor was heroically riding at the front of his troops and slaughtering Germans on the mainland, his legate was capturing barbarian sea raiders in the channel. However, rather than returning all the captured booty to its owners, Carausius was keeping large parts of it for himself. Before Maximian could seize and arrest him, he bribed the troops of Britain and the "Saxon Shore Forts" to proclaim him emperor of a breakaway *Imperium Britanniarum* early in the year 286.

It was the rebellion of Carausius which forced Diocletian to raise Maximian from the position of son and Caesar to the status of brother emperor and co-Augustus in the spring of 286. After establishing a military base at Mainz later that year, Maximian repulsed an Alamannic attack in January of 287; and a few months later he invaded German lands across the Rhine in force, wreaking havoc in barbarian territory. In 288, Diocletian arrived for the conference at Mainz, and the co-Augusti planned operations which would stabilize the Rhine frontier, and prepare the way for war with Carausius. It was probably at this time that Constantius was promoted to a senior generalship along the Rhine under Maximian. Both emperors knew their fellow Illyrian well, and confidently judged that his military and administrative talents would be helpful to Maximian in the coming campaigns. The year ended well with Diocletian hitting the Alamanni from Raetia, and Constantius attacking the Franci along the lower Rhine. By early 289 Roman forces were in command of the Rhine frontier from the Black Forest to the Moselle Valley, and Maximian was positioning troops for land attacks and building ships for sea battles against Carausius. Diocletian was marching east again to rebuff Sarmatian raids on the Danube frontier, and to inspect defense lines in Anatolia and Syria. On the anniversary of the founding of Rome in April of 289, the Gallic orator Mamertinus was able to offer a panegyric at the western court extolling the recent military successes of Diocletian and Maximian, celebrating the return of political stability under their Dyarchy, and praising the concord they exhibited as the earthly representatives of their heavenly patrons Jupiter and Hercules.[3]

Over the next couple of years the senior emperor would again be successful in his military endeavors in the east, pushing Sarmatian tribes out of Dacia during the summer

of 289, and defeating Saraceni raids in Syria during the summer of 290. He then returned to Sirmium on the central Danube to concentrate on administrative matters. His colleague would again have mixed results in the west, separating some Franks from alliance with Carausius by early 289, and defeating some of the coastal forces of the usurper, but losing his fleet in a maritime battle in the North Sea later that year. He toured the cities of central and southern Gaul over the next year. Meanwhile, Diocletian had been contemplating a program of reforms which would help the imperial team build upon their early successes, and buttress their continued reign. Thus, he requested Maximian to meet him in Milan for an imperial conference during the winter of 290–91.[4]

A Gallic panegyrist who delivered a birthday address to Maximian the following summer recounted the winter meeting. He marveled at how the co-emperors were able to traverse the Alpine passes in the dead of winter, and descend like gods from the snow-capped mountains into the plains of northern Italy. He spoke of the delight of the people at seeing the two emperors riding in a chariot together triumphantly and conversing in a palace together amicably. He reviewed the victories of Diocletian in the east and of Maximian in the west which were restoring the integrity of imperial borders. And he predicted that their fraternal *concordia* and *pietas* would bring more *gloria* and *felicitas* to the Roman Empire. The Latin panegyric reflected the public pageantry and religious festivities at the imperial conference. However, subsequent events reveal that private discussions about sweeping reforms must have taken place there as well. The emperors certainly had a right to celebrate the achievements which marked the first half-decade of their joint reign. Yet they also had reasons to fear the dangers which loomed over their continued rule. Persia was re-emerging as a menacing power on the borders of Syria, and Egypt was growing restless under the attacks of Nubian raiders in the Thebaid. Britain was still held by an independent usurper, and Berber tribesmen were raiding imperial estates and towns in North Africa. Diocletian must have reviewed these problems with his co-Augustus, and suggested some policies which they might consider employing to overcome them. The sources are largely silent about the next couple of years; but the extensive reforms which were introduced thereafter suggest that the co-Augusti were making detailed plans for the initiation of a new order which they hoped would bring the continual chaos of the imperial crisis to an end.[5]

The new order was inaugurated on 1 March 293 as Diocletian at Sirmium and Maximian at Milan each appointed trusted Illyrian soldiers to be their sons and co-emperors in a collegiate system of rule known as the *Tetrarchy* (a Greek term meaning “the rule of four”). The new imperial college was composed of a senior emperor with the title *Augustus* assisted by a junior



Ill. 8 Argentiferous *follis* from the Diocletianic coinage reform with a laureate head of “Galerius the Noble Caesar” on the obverse, and the “Genius of the Roman People” on the reverse (Heraclea, 296–97).



Ill. 9 Argentiferous *follis* from the Diocletianic coinage reform with the laureate head of “Constantius the Noble Caesar” on the obverse, and the “Genius of the Roman People” on the reverse (Siscia, 294).

emperor with the title *Caesar* in each half of the empire. An Illyrian soldier of peasant stock, Galerius Maximin, who had risen through the ranks with his compatriots to a high command, was adopted by Diocletian and became the junior Caesar in the east with the official name of Gaius Galerius Valerius Maximianus (Ill. 8). The father of Constantine, Flavius Constantius, who was a few years older than Galerius, was adopted by Maximian

and became the senior Caesar in the west with the official name of Marcus Flavius Valerius Constantius (Ill. 9). Besides becoming the "sons" and taking the Roman forenames of their senior emperors and the Valerian clan name of Diocletian, the Caesars were also linked to the co-Augusti by marriage alliances and religious ideology. Galerius had to divorce his wife and marry Valeria, the daughter of Diocletian; and Constantius had to put aside Helena and marry Theodora, a daughter of Maximian. As Diocletian was the "son" of Jove, so Galerius became the "grandson" of that divinity, the "son" of the *Augustus Jovius,* and thus *Caesar Jovius,* a member of the eastern Jovian Dynasty. As Maximian was the "son" of Hercules, so Constantius became the "grandson" of that deity, the "son" of the *Augustus Herculius,* and thence *Caesar Herculius,* a member of the western Herculian Dynasty. Although the Jovian-Herculian imperial theology initiated by Diocletian continued to dominate the propaganda of the expanded imperial college for the next dozen years, the Caesars were each accorded their own divine patrons—*Sol* for Galerius, and *Mars* for Constantius. As the god of light and protector of several Illyrian emperors, Sol was popular in the east. As the god of war and father of the Romans, Mars was always popular in the west. However, it was the unity of the tetrarchs which was emphasized in official documents and art. Their names appeared together at the beginning of all imperial enactments; coins were issued for each of them from all the imperial mints; and they were depicted together in imperial statues—the famous porphyry group in Venice shows them wearing identical military garb, embracing one another, and standing resolutely to repress chaos and restore order in the Roman Empire (Ill. 10).[6]

The tetrarchic system was designed to solve the problem of imperial succession and the menace of external invasions; and, with the recovery of political and military stability, to foster a restoration of economic prosperity and cultural unity in the Roman world. The Caesars would work under and train to succeed the Augusti upon their death or retirement; and a college of four cooperating emperors could more easily defeat the internal usurpers and the external enemies of the empire, and more effectively control the economic resources and the cultural expressions of its populace than a single sovereign had been able to do in the past. Diocletian was the senior Augustus and recognized head of the Tetrarchy; he would normally operate within and oversee the affairs of the eastern half of the empire with the help of Caesar Galerius. Maximian was the co-Augustus with his brother emperor, but deferred to him on the larger policy issues; he would work within and supervise the affairs of the western half of the empire with the aid of Caesar Constantius. Though they all were on the move in coordinated military campaigns during the early years after the formation of the Tetrarchy, they each eventually established regional capitals—Nicomedia up in the Anatolian area of northern Bithynia for Diocletian; Thessalonica beneath the lower Danube frontier in northern Greece for Galerius; Milan beneath the Alpine provinces in northern Italy for Maximian; and Trier behind the Rhine frontier in the Moselle Valley for Constantius. Lactantius, the panegyrists, and archaeological remains reveal ambitious building programs by the emperors in the regional capitals. In their respective palaces, the four rulers appeared in elaborate robes and participated in formalized ceremonies prescribed by Diocletian. Through the Jovian-Herculian imperial theology and through a more ritualized oriental court ceremony, the senior Augustus wished to



Ill. 10 Porphyry statue group of the First Tetrarchy—Constantius and Maximian, Diocletian and Galerius in identical military garb, embracing one another, and standing resolutely to repress chaos and restore order in the Roman Empire (*ca.* 293–305).

raise the imperial office to a higher status than it had held under the *Principate*. In the new order, the emperors were no longer just *principes,* "first men" of the Roman Republic, but now *domini,* "lords" of the Roman Empire. Many modern scholars have used the term *Dominate* to characterize the more autocratic government and the more regimented society of the later Roman Empire. In this system the emperors were to be treated almost as sacral figures, and revolts against them were to be seen nearly as sacrilege. With four rulers standing together against usurpers and barbarians, the revolts and invasions which had been common in the third-century crisis would hereafter have less chances of success. The imperial office in its new embodiment was thus meant to be more safe, and succession to it more secure.[7]

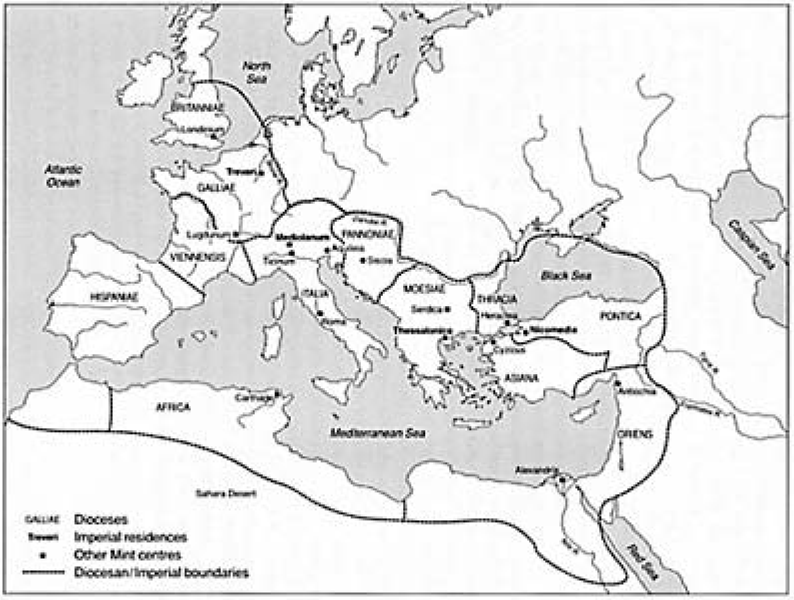
Diocletian introduced a number of reforms along with the inauguration of the tetrarchic system in order to assist the imperial college in achieving its goals of restoring the political stability, territorial integrity, economic prosperity and cultural unity which the empire had lacked for so many decades. Lactantius, who early participated in the cultural reforms but later suffered from the Christian persecutions of the Tetrarchy, offered an incisive summary of the innovations. He judged that "Diocletian…turned the world upside down because he made three colleagues participants in his rule and divided the world into four parts." He claimed that "armies were multiplied as each of the emperors strove to have a far larger number of troops than previous princes had led." He recorded that "provinces were also cut up into pieces," and that "many governors and more officials were imposed on individual regions and even on cities." He complained that "agents of the prefects, and numerous finance officers and controllers…engaged in collecting taxes on innumerable resources." And he reported extensive building activities which resulted in the rise of palaces, circuses, arms factories, mints, and other public structures across the empire.[8] Other ancient sources attest to the sweeping reforms of the era.

Politically, the new tetrarchic system entailed the establishment of four imperial courts, each staffed with administrative officials to assist the individual emperors in governing the different regions of the empire they ruled. The chief official at the side of each emperor was called a *praefectus praetorio* (Praetorian Prefect), and he headed up the administrative framework in his area of the empire. This official had evolved from being merely the commander of the Praetorian Guards in the first century to being nearly an assistant emperor by the third century. Prefects would still command some soldiers attached to each emperor, and would occasionally lead troops in the field for a few more years. However, in the new order they would gradually evolve into civilian prime ministers, dispatching imperial orders to the provinces, overseeing the supply system for the armies, and supervising the financial and judicial affairs of the state. The two key finance officers in the central courts were the *rationalis rerum summarum,* who controlled imperial mints, and the gathering of taxes in coin; and the *magister rerum privatarum,* who supervised imperial estates, and taxes in kind. Other officials, such as the *magistri memoriae* and *magistri libellorum,* were in charge of the *officia* which kept records, and drafted rescripts and letters.[9] Expanding this bureaucracy from one or two courts to four greatly increased the costs of sustaining the imperial government.

Militarily, Diocletian and his co-rulers significantly expanded and diversified the armed forces of the empire. Their Illyrian predecessors had already founded the mobile Protector corps around the emperors, and added several new legions to the thirty-four

inherited from the late Severan period. Diocletian and Maximian continued building up the legionary forces during their Dyarchy, and gave mobile forces and new legions to their Caesars during the Tetrarchy. From the accounts of military actions in the ancient sources and from the listings of military commands in the early fifth-century *Notitia Dignitatum,* it has been estimated that from fifty-three to sixty-eight legions and over a half million men were under arms by the end of Diocletian's reign—a doubling of the military forces of the early empire. In the early years of the Tetrarchy, large and mobile field armies were gathered around and used by each of the emperors to suppress internal usurpers and defeat barbarian invasions. With the return of stability, these great field armies were broken up, and stationed along the frontiers in a much tighter preclusive system than the earlier empire had known. A network of small, self-contained, and heavily fortified *castella* or "small forts" was built at the edges of the frontier provinces as a hard-point defense line against incursions. These were backed by many small detachments of mobile cavalry units known as *vexillationes,* and by large legionary bases at hinge positions behind the frontier. Invaders were to be slowed down by the *limitanei,* as the "border troops" came to be known, and intercepted and driven back by the cavalry and legionary forces. The troops were supported by fortified government granaries and arms factories, and by walled frontier towns which offered them provisions and shelters the invaders lacked. These frontier forces were put under the command of *duces limitis,* "border generals," who were independent of the provincial governors and reported through the military hierarchy to the emperors. This shallow "defense-in-depth" system was meant to keep military actions in fortified frontier zones, and protect the civilian interior provinces where economic prosperity could once again flourish.[10] However, the larger military forces and heavier defensive system also added to the costs of supporting the late Roman government.

Administratively, the provincial government of the empire was reorganized, and economically, the productive capacities of the empire were regimented to support the expanded imperial college and the enlarged military forces. The brief comments of Lactantius and the detailed listings of the *Laterculus Veronensis,* the "Verona List" of Roman provinces dating from the early fourth century, show that Diocletian divided the forty-some provinces of the early empire into smaller units to create a total of about a hundred provinces for the late empire. Some of the little ones were left alone; but many mid-sized ones were bisected, and several larger ones were cut into many pieces. For example, Narbonensis and Africa in the west were each divided into three provinces; while Thrace and Asia in the east were respectively cut into four and seven provinces. In the early empire, senatorial legates had usually served as governors-general in charge of the military forces and the judicial courts of the large provinces. Although a few senators would be



Map 2 The tetrarchic empire of Diocletian (*ca.* 299).

allowed to use the old title of *proconsul* and serve as governors over the remnants of proconsular Asia and Africa, and some would be used as governors with the new title of *corrector* over the regions of Italy, the majority of senators would no longer serve as governors in the new and smaller provinces. Middle-class equestrians—often old military officers—were henceforth chosen by Diocletian and his co-emperors to serve as governors of the new provinces with the title of *praeses* or *iudex* ("Judge"), and only with oversight of the judicial and financial affairs of the area. In the new order, military commands and civilian offices were being separated, with *praesides* acting as the civilian governors in individual provinces, and *duces* serving as the military commanders over frontier sectors. The late imperial governors thus did not have the kind of resources that early imperial legates had been able to employ for revolts against the central government. More importantly, the new governors could gather more information about and maintain closer control over the smaller provinces they ruled. As a larger number of provinces meant a greater amount of correspondence for the imperial courts to process, Diocletian created new mid-level provincial officials and groupings of provinces to handle this increase in imperial business. He set up twelve *vicarii praefectorum praetorio* to serve as "Agents of the Praetorian Prefects" over twelve *Dioceses* into which the new provinces were grouped across the empire. In the new system, each of the emperors through his prefect administered three dioceses: Constantius held the dioceses of Britanniae (after he reconquered it in 296), Galliae, and Viennensis in the northwest; Maximian had the dioceses of Italia, Hispaniae, and Africa in the southwest; and after the completion of the Persian War (299), Galerius held the dioceses of Pannoniae, Moesiae, and Thracia in east

Europe; and Diocletian had the dioceses of Pontica, Asiana, and Oriens in the Near East. In this system, the emperors sent imperial letters, edicts, and rescripts through their prefects to the vicars and down to the governors; and the governors sent census information, taxes, and judicial appeals through the vicars to the prefects and up to the emperors. This expanded provincial organization allowed the emperors to gain greater control over and more effectively regiment the human and material resources of the empire (Map 2).[11] A reformed coinage and a regimented society would be at the center of the economic reforms initiated by the tetrarchs and controlled by their agents. Diocletian had upgraded the gold coinage early in his reign; but in 294 he overhauled the whole coinage and mint system of the empire in order to strengthen the economy and signal the new order. The gold *aureus* would be minted at 60 to the pound; a new silver *argenteus* would be minted at 96 to the pound; and a new argentiferous bronze probably known as the *follis* would be minted at 32 to the pound, and in smaller fractions. Independent local mints were closed or converted to imperial mints. Fourteen official mints located in key regions of the empire would henceforth produce the coins needed for the government and the economy, and employ standardized Latin inscriptions and patriotic or religious motifs supportive of the Tetrarchy. Londinium, Treveri, and Lugdunum served the dioceses of Constantius; Ticinum, Roma, Aquileia, and Carthago those of Maximian; Siscia, Serdica or Thessalonica, and Heraclea served the dioceses of Galerius; and Nicomedia, Cyzicus, Antiochia, and Alexandria those of Diocletian. The citizens of the Roman world had not handled coins with the fine metal content, flan size and weight of the new denominations for generations. The old antoninianus had fallen to a weight of under 3 grams back in the days of Gallienus. It had been raised to about 4 grams in the proto-reform of Aurelian. However, the new *follis,* which replaced those debased pieces as the standard medium of exchange, would be a much thicker and wider coin and weigh over 10 grams. Roman citizens using the new coin types knew that their new emperors were serious about economic reform. Other measures indicated this also. As former field generals who had worried about keeping their soldiers well supplied while facing barbarians on the frontiers, Diocletian and his colleagues would institute taxes in kind as well as taxes in coin. The irregular and regional requisitions of the *annona militaris,* which had fallen on devastated districts least able to supply them, would now be regularized and spread out across the empire. Diocletian planned a system of five-year censuses by which the expanded bureaucracy could register the productive capacities of its citizens *(capita)* and land units *(iuga)*. With this detailed knowledge of the resources available to them, the tetrarchs would be able to institute yearly budgets and issue *indictiones* for collecting taxes in coin and in kind necessary to support the government and the military. A regimented "command economy" resulted with state-run arms factories, fortified granaries, imperial transport systems and hereditary service for essential professions established to harness the resources of a "fortress empire." The first census would be held in 296; but the bureaucratic structure to administer it, and the personnel and facilities for the collection and distribution of the new taxes in coin and in kind based upon it, were obviously being established in the early years of the Tetrarchy.[12]

Culturally, the Illyrian soldier emperors who made up the First Tetrarchy were patriotic provincials who wished to strengthen the bonds of imperial unity by focusing upon the linguistic, legal, and religious traditions of Rome—i.e., the Latin language, Roman law, and the Olympian divinities. Latin was the official language of the Roman

Empire, and Diocletian saw it as a unifying force in imperial culture. He wanted it used at all imperial events, in all official communications, and in all imperial coin and monumental inscriptions. Generals were expected to issue military commands, and governors to write judicial decisions in precise Latin. In order to foster a better knowledge and wider use of the language, Diocletian and his colleagues appointed official professors of Latin rhetoric in key imperial cities—the eloquent north African rhetorician Lactantius would be the recipient of such an appointment by Diocletian in Nicomedia, and the talented Gallic rhetorician Eumenius would be given a similar appointment by Constantius in Autun a few years after the formation of the Tetrarchy. The latter had served as a legal secretary *(magister sacrae memoriae)* for the western rulers before his return to Autun. Diocletian also demanded that Roman legal principles be employed in the rescripts sent out under his name dealing with points of criminal and civil law. He insisted that his officials and subjects knew that Roman law took precedence over local customs in the imperial judicial system. To this end, he had his own legal secretaries Gregorianus before and Hermogenianus just after the start of the Tetrarchy draw up collections of imperial rescripts based on Roman principles which would be distributed as handbooks to governors for the proper administration of law—the *Codex Gregorianus* (292), and the *Codex Hermogenianus* (295). Diocletian especially wanted his subjects to venerate the “Roman” deities of the Olympian pantheon. The only concession he would make to the syncretistic yearnings of the age for a “Highest Divinity” was to promote Jupiter, the king of the Olympian pantheon, as the special divine patron of the new imperial order. Jupiter had long been venerated in an ancient temple in Rome above the Roman Forum on the Capitoline Hill. According to ancient mythology, he was the god who had created order out of the chaos of primeval times, and presided over a rational cosmos. As Diocletian struggled to restore order amidst the chaos of the third-century crisis, he could particularly relate to this Greco-Roman deity. Yet, neither *Jupiter* the supreme god nor Diocletian the chief emperor stood alone in the struggle for order. And thus, some of the divine helpers of Jupiter in the celestial sphere would be promoted as the divine patrons of the imperial colleagues of Diocletian in the terrestrial realm. *Hercules,* the son and laborer of Jupiter, was also a favorite Roman god, and had long been venerated in an old temple in the Forum Boarium. *Sol,* the generic sun god, had become very popular since the reign of Aurelian. In the west he was often syncretized with Apollo, another son of Jupiter who served as a god of light, truth and prophecy. *Mars,* the divine father of Romulus, founder of Rome, was likewise a son of Jupiter and the god of war. The first emperor, Augustus, had built great temples for Apollo and Mars in the center of Rome. As these Olympian deities assisted the king of the gods, Jupiter, across the cosmos, they would be promoted as the divine patrons of Maximian, Galerius, and Constantius who aided the senior tetrarch, Diocletian, in the empire. The four emperors were determined to lead imperial subjects back to the worship of these quintessentially Roman gods, and thereby earn the *pax deorum* which insured victory in war and prosperity in peace for the Roman state. Temple dedications, sculptural reliefs, and coin motifs of the era would illustrate the conservative religious program of the Tetrarchy. The gold coinage, for example, regularly paired obverse portraits of the emperors with reverse motifs of their patron divinities. The silver coinage issued for all the emperors contained a standard reverse motif showing the tetrarchs sacrificing together before a turreted enclosure, with inscriptions celebrating the valor of

the army or the victories of the emperors which the correct worship of the gods had presumably inspired. The new *folles* long carried a standard motif and inscription in honor of the GENIO POPULI ROMANI ("To the Genius of the Roman People"—Ills. 8 and 9). It was a patriotic message saluting the divine spirit which had guided the Romans to world rule. By attempting to regiment the use of the Latin language, the application of Roman law, and the worship of Roman deities, Diocletian was hoping to restore cultural unity to Roman society.[13]

In the spring of 293, each of the tetrarchs marched off to different sectors of the Roman world where they would oversee the campaigns intended to restore the integrity of imperial borders and implement the reforms designed to renew the vitality of imperial society. As one of the Caesars in the new order, Constantius would now begin to play a central role in the Roman Empire, and would win some key military victories in the west. As a Caesar's son, Constantine would now begin to emerge as a public figure in imperial politics, and would serve in important military campaigns in the east. While serving as a provincial governor and army commander, Constantius had probably taken care that his son receive some elementary education in Latin grammar, and gain some early experience in military service. By the time he joined the imperial college, his son had reached the age of twenty. Literary accounts and coin portraits show that Constantine closely resembled his father, and had the strong physique of his Illyrian ancestors. Constantius surely cared deeply for his only son and carried high hopes for his future. Though he was forced by Roman tradition and political necessity to divorce Helena and marry Theodora to strengthen his ties to Maximian when he became a junior emperor, Constantius was not compelled to abandon his career hopes for Constantine. Both of the western tetrarchs had sons, and out of paternal love and dynastic ambitions would have harbored hopes that their offspring might follow them to the imperial throne. Diocletian seems to have encouraged the dynastic ambitions of his western colleagues. He initially urged Constantius to dispatch Constantine, and later Maximian to send his son Maxentius, for training at the courts and service in the armies of the eastern tetrarchs. Such arrangements provided more links between the Illyrian soldier emperors making up the imperial college; and helped assure the loyalty of the western rulers to their eastern colleagues. So when Maximian elevated Constantius to the imperial office of *Caesar* and commissioned him to govern the northwestern dioceses, he also promoted Constantine to the military rank of *tribunus* (junior legionary officer) and ordered him to serve in the eastern provinces. He gave his older daughter Theodora in marriage to Constantius, and had his younger daughter Fausta give the plumed helmet of a Roman officer to Constantine to signify the new status of Flavian father and son. These ceremonies occurred in northern Italy in the spring of 293. Constantius and Constantine then parted company, and would not see each other again for more than a decade. Constantius took his new wife to Trier, where she would present him with six children over the coming years. The discarded Helena apparently had no interest in another marriage; and seems to have harbored resentment against "the other woman" and her offspring. Constantine therefore probably took his mother with him to the east, where he could care for her welfare, and she could follow his career. Though Constantius and Constantine were stationed at opposite ends of the Roman world for the next dozen years, they undoubtedly maintained contact with each other. The military victories and mild rule of the western Caesar were well known in the east; and stories of the military exploits and growing

popularity of the Caesar's son must have reached the west. The standing of Constantine among the soldiers in the eastern armies was strengthened by the fact that he was the son of an emperor; and the manner in which he deported himself must have made his father proud. When Constantius would finally achieve the position and power to do so, he would demand that his son Constantine be allowed to return to him in the west.[14]

In the early years of the Tetrarchy, the co-emperors carried out a series of coordinated military campaigns which succeeded in repressing the internal usurpers and defeating the external enemies of the Roman Empire.

In the west, the breakaway British Empire of Carausius, Germanic invasions across the Rhine, and Berber raids into North Africa were the pressing problems. Constantius swiftly began to deal with the first two problems. In the spring of 293 he launched a massive surprise attack on the important continental base of Carausius at *Bononia* (Boulogne) on the northern coast of Gaul. His troops besieged the city by land and built a mole of piles and boulders across the mouth of its harbour, cutting it off from reinforcements. By early summer the city had surrendered, and the other bases of the usurper followed suit, bringing all of Gaul back under Roman dominion. In the aftermath of this victory, Carausius was deposed by his finance minister Allectus, who hoped he might be recognized as the ruler of Britain by the Tetrarchy. The legitimate emperors were not amenable to such a compromise; so, Constantius carried out the preparations necessary for a major invasion across the channel over the next three years. He had part of his forces build a fleet for the invasion; and he led another part into the estuaries of the Scheldt and Rhine rivers to conquer the German allies of Allectus. During this period, the western rulers probably conferred in Gaul (late 293) and in Italy (295) for joint planning of the British campaign. By the summer of 296, the western emperors were ready—Maximian moved up to a position along the Rhine to guard the rear of his Caesar; and Constantius directed a two-pronged channel invasion of Britain. He led warships and transports from Boulogne across the channel toward the east coast of Britain near Dover, where Allectus was stationed with the bulk of his forces; and dispatched his Praetorian Prefect Asclepiodotus from the mouth of the Seine out into the Atlantic for a surprise landing along the south coast of Britain near Portchester. The approach of the Caesar held the attention of Allectus long enough for the troops of the prefect to land in the south, burn their ships and march inland. When bad weather dispersed his fleet and prevented a landing by Constantius, Allectus led his forces southwest where he was defeated and killed by the prefect's troops. Some of the Frankish mercenaries serving under the usurper escaped and marched to London with the intention of sacking the city. In the meantime, some of the troops of Constantius had reached shore near the Thames, and marched to London, where they intercepted and slaughtered the Frankish forces. Constantius then made a landing on the east coast, and rode to London, where he was enthusiastically greeted as a savior of the city, and the restorer of light to Britain. In the aftermath of the reconquest, the island was divided into four provinces grouped into the diocese of Britanniae, the "Saxon Shore Forts" were returned to loyal troops who patrolled the channel to keep pirates away, and an active commerce was resumed between Britain and Gaul. When the Caesar returned to Trier, a beautiful 10-aurei medallion was minted to commemorate his victory—the obverse depicted a portrait bust of Constantius within an inscription carrying his full name and the title "Noble Caesar"; the reverse showed him riding a horse in triumph toward London with Lady Britannia

kneeling before the city gates with an inscription hailing Constantius REDDITOR LUCIS AETERNAE, "The Restorer of Eternal Light." At the beginning of his *Quinquennalia,* the fifth year of his reign, on 1 March 297, a Gallic orator offered a panegyric at the palace of the Caesar in Trier recounting how the Roman world was being reclaimed by the valor of Constantius and his colleagues. He reviewed the British campaign of the Caesar in detail, and listed the recent campaigns of the other tetrarchs in brief. It is evident from these remarks that Maximian was by then in North Africa. When Constantius had returned from Britain to Gaul in the autumn of 296, and could watch over Italy and Spain as well as his own domains, the Augustus was then able to tackle the problem in Africa. He gathered a large field army, marched through Spain, and crossed over into the north African provinces in early 297. For several years, Berber tribes like the Quinquegentiani had been descending from their high desert strongholds and raiding the greenbelt of Roman lands in the provinces of Mauretania and Numidia. They were attacking both rural estates and urban centers. In a series of battles during the spring and summer of that year, Maximian defeated several of the tribal groups, and drove them out of Roman territory. Then, through the autumn and winter of 297–98, he led his troops into the mountains where the Berber tribes resided, destroyed many of their villages, and drove the remnant of their peoples back into the Sahara Desert. In March 298 he staged a triumph in Carthage, where he was greeted as a conquering hero who had restored the light of Roman rule to North Africa. Following his brutal campaigns, he established new fortifications all along the provincial frontiers, and toured the cities of North Africa whose citizens honored him with thanksgivings. He returned to Rome for a triumph in the spring of 299.[15]

In the east, barbarian pressures on the Danube, unrest and revolts in Egypt, and Persian aggression in Syria were the problems facing Diocletian and Galerius. The eastern Augustus at first elected to remain in the Danube area and decided to send his Caesar to Egypt. During the next three years, Diocletian won key victories over the Sarmatians in the autumn of 294 and the Carpi in the summer of 296, and directed the building of heavily fortified military bases on both banks of the Danube in order to provide a stronger line of defense against barbarians. At the same time, Galerius traveled to the far south of Egypt where he led successful campaigns against the Blemmyes, black tribesmen from Nubia, who were raiding and disrupting the trade routes from the Nile to the Red Sea around Coptos and Busiris. However, the renewal of Persian aggression forced the Caesar to travel north to Syria in the spring of 295. Narseh (293–302), a son of the great Shapur, had taken the Persian throne in the year the Tetrarchy had been initiated, and he soon began to undermine the treaty Diocletian had dictated to his weaker predecessor in 287. Narseh reclaimed all territories ceded to Rome, allied with Saracen princes in the Syrian desert, reasserted Persian influence over Armenia, and supported Manichean missions into Roman provinces. Galerius was able to stop the first Persian movements in the Syrian desert late in the summer of 295. But Narseh came back in strength the following year, conquering Armenia and Mesopotamia, and destroying many Roman army posts in the Syrian desert. With the Roman east in serious danger, Galerius requested help from Diocletian. The senior Augustus arrived in Syria in late 296, and planned a joint campaign with his Caesar for the following spring. While Diocletian guarded the Syrian frontier, Galerius crossed the Euphrates and met the forces of Narseh near Callinicum. Both sides suffered heavy losses, and retreated. Diocletian was unhappy

with the performance of his Caesar and forced him to run beside his chariot when they returned to Antioch. Unhappy with the new tax system, and taking advantage of the Syrian reverse, the Egyptians revolted and declared Domitius Domitianus their emperor. Diocletian decided to handle this usurpation while he sent Galerius to gather fresh Danubian troops for another Persian campaign. The Augustus put down the revolt in the Egyptian Thebaid during the autumn of 297; but the great metropolis of Alexandria continued the revolt under Aurelius Achilleus. After a long siege over the winter months, Diocletian took the city and punished its citizens in the spring of 298—a triumphal column placed on a prominent hill of the city commemorates his victory. For the remainder of the year, he toured the two Egyptian provinces, instituting the new tax system, setting up military fortifications, and establishing treaties with tribes south of the provincial borders. In the meantime, Galerius had returned from Europe with a large field army. Chastened by his earlier failure, he prepared carefully for a renewal of the Persian war. He linked his troops with those of the deposed Armenian king Tiridates, and personally led reconnaissance expeditions to devise a successful strategy. He moved the bulk of his forces into Armenia, and forced Narseh to follow him into a carefully laid trap. Eutropius related the result:

> He routed Narseh, plundered his camp, captured his wives, sisters and children along with a vast number of the Persian nobility and a huge amount of Persian treasure, and drove the king himself into the remotest deserts of his kingdom.

Galerius then led his armies—in which a young Constantine was an officer—from one victory to another as they descended into Mesopotamia, ultimately conquering the Persian capital of Ctesiphon, and finally gazing upon the ruins of fabled Babylon along the Euphrates River. The Caesar initially rebuffed Persian peace envoys, and reminded them how they had treated the emperor Valerian. By early 299 Diocletian had reached Mesopotamia, and marched to Nisibis in order to meet and congratulate Galerius on his victories. The Augustus took over the peace negotiations, and dictated a treaty which expanded Roman territory in the east and gave it more easily defensible frontiers against Persia. Armenia and Iberia were made Roman client kingdoms, several new provinces were established, and military fortifications and roads were set up in the region out to the Tigris River. Special celebrations were held for the victorious eastern emperors as they entered Antioch in the late spring of 299; and a triumphal arch was erected shortly thereafter by Galerius in Thessalonica. A graphic relief sculpture on this depicts him on horseback trampling Persian enemies.[16]

In the first six years of the Tetrarchy, Diocletian and his colleagues had concentrated on achieving their political and military goals of repressing internal usurpations and in defeating external invasions around the Roman world. The new order, with its multiple emperors and coordinated campaigns, and separate military and civilian hierarchies, was making it more difficult for internal usurpers to revolt against the central government; while its enlarged military force and tighter defensive network was making it more difficult for barbarian foes to invade the provinces of the Empire.

In the later years of the Tetrarchy, the Augusti often remained at their interior capitals guiding the policies of the commonwealth while the Caesars resided at their outlying

capitals guarding the borders of the empire. Diocletian used either Antioch or Nicomedia as his imperial residence, made a tour of inspection through Egypt (301–2), and governed the Asian, Pontican, and Oriental dioceses. Galerius resided at Thessalonica, directed campaigns against the Marcomanni (299), Carpi, and Sarmatians (301–2), and supervised the Pannonian, Moesian, and Thracian dioceses. Maximian used Milan as his imperial residence, and governed the Italian, Spanish, and African dioceses. Constantius resided at Trier, repulsed several Germanic raids (301, 302, 303 and 304), and supervised the Britannic, Gallic, and Viennensian dioceses. While vigilance still had to be maintained against external enemies, the tetrarchs could concentrate more on economic and cultural affairs during this period. Their efforts in these fields would have mixed results.[17]

As they were bringing the anarchy of the third-century crisis to an end, the emperors began to implement policies to restore agrarian cultivation and rebuild urban centers. Maximian and Constantius settled defeated bands of Germans in depopulated areas of Gaul, and had them bring devastated farmlands back into production. Diocletian and Galerius also transferred Roman citizens from Asia and barbarian tribes from above the Danube into ravaged areas of Moesia, Dacia, and Thrace, and had them recultivate these regions. The produce from these farms would help feed the new military installations along the frontiers and the revived cities behind them. The panegyrists of the period exalted over seeing barbarians who had recently devastated these areas with swords now cultivating them with plows. Many ancient authors described the urban reconstruction programs which the tetrarchs carried out across the Roman world. Aurelius Victor reported how "the hills of Rome and other cities, especially Carthage, Milan and Nicomedia had been adorned with very novel and beautifully refined buildings." Eumenius praised "the reconstruction not only of temples and public places but even of private homes" in his native Autun and throughout Gaul. Lactantius recorded the building boom at Nicomedia and listed the many types of structures erected in the eastern provinces. Archaeological remains of city walls and gates, imperial palaces, triumphal arches and columns, pagan temples, curiae and bathhouses from York in Britain to Alexandria in Egypt attest to the truth of the sources. The increase in agrarian production and the revival of urban construction were the successful aspects of the economic policies of Diocletian and his colleagues. Unfortunately, they were less successful in curbing monetary inflation. The massive amounts of the new gold, silver, and folles coinage being minted across the empire, and the intensive demands for goods and labor being made by the army and government, led to profiteering by merchants and rising market prices. Diocletian reacted to the situation by publishing an edict of maximum prices and wages, and by increasing mandatory services to the state. The *Edictum de Pretiis* was issued in the names of all the emperors in late 301, but seems to have been enforced only in the east where inflation was worst. It angrily condemned the "uncontrolled lust for gain" exhibited by profiteers who were "insolently and covertly attacking public welfare," and went on to list maximum prices which could be charged and maximum wages which could be paid for hundreds of common goods and services. Capital punishment was prescribed for violators. Lactantius wrote that the immediate results of the edict were the growth of a black market for many goods and the shedding of much blood for small items. The law was quietly withdrawn after a while as Diocletian's other economic policies provided more salutary solutions. It had long been common in ancient societies for wealthy citizens to provide free services to their community—the *decuriones*

of the Roman Empire held the magisterial positions, collected the imperial taxes, built the temples and other public facilities, and sponsored the festivals in the communities in which they resided. These activities were known as *munera civilia* (public services), and were often done without remuneration. Diocletian linked the concepts of *munera civilia* and *annona militaris* (military provisions), and forced citizens from all classes of society to provide the services and/or the supplies the state needed for its operation as a part of their tax obligation. The regular censuses of the productive capacities of its citizens and land units provided the detailed information with which the government could draw up its budgets and make its exactions from its subjects in money, supplies, or services. Such a system cut right through the problems of unstable monetary values and inflated market prices. However, it resulted in a more autocratic and active government than the Roman world had known in earlier centuries, and prefigured the state-controlled and regimented economy of the Byzantine Empire.[18]

With the return of peace and prosperity, the emperors of the Tetrarchy enhanced their efforts to unify the people of the empire around the cultural traditions of Rome. The appointment of Latin rhetoricians as government-sponsored teachers and the rebuilding of schools in key provincial cities helped revive the study of the Latin language and increase the output of Latin literature across the Roman world—the active schools of Latin rhetoric and the rich corpus of Latin panegyrics in the west, and the production of numerous Latin narrative histories in the east during the fourth century testify to this. Although Greek was preferred among the literati and merchants of the east, and native languages were used by the lower classes of outlying areas, the knowledge of Latin was required for successful careers in the army, the administration, and the courts. The reforms of Diocletian were making the acquisition of that knowledge more easy. The insistence on the precedence of Roman over native law helped lessen the differences in social customs around the empire—consanguinous marriages which had been allowed in the Greek and Semitic east were outlawed in this era as Roman legislation on marriage was widely enforced. Diocletian believed that the ancestral customs of Rome were in conformance with the will of the deities who protected the Roman Empire. Pleasing the gods through right behavior and worshipping them with pious rites were at the center of his cultural reforms. Aurelius Victor reported how "the most ancient religious cults were looked after with the utmost respect" by the Illyrian soldier emperors. The literature and art from this period show Diocletian and his co-emperors piously carrying out the worship of their patron deities and diligently working for the revival of Roman religious cults. It was this very emphasis on reviving traditional pagan religion that led Diocletian and some of his colleagues to undertake the least successful of their policies—a major persecution of Christianity.[19]

As they were rebuilding pagan temples and staging festivals in the cities, and restoring ancient rites and requiring sacrifices in the camps, the tetrarchs began to realize how much ground had been lost to the mystery cults in general and Christianity in particular. The savior gods and spiritual life, and the communal meals and community support found in these cults, offered more personal and intense forms of religious experience than did the official state rites of the Olympian gods and the deified emperors. During the anarchy of the third-century imperial crisis, many people across the empire had turned to these alternate forms of religious experience for solace and support. The conservative Illyrian emperors did not have a problem with the mystery cults. Their devotees were willing to

worship in the public rites, and they often syncretized their deities with the Roman pantheon—Egyptian Isis with Roman Venus, and Persian Mithras with Sol Invictus, for example. The rulers, however, did have a problem with the Christian Church. Its members refused to participate in the state cults, and they still proclaimed their God the only true Deity, and labeled the worship of other gods idolatry. Moreover, since the toleration decree of Gallienus in 260, the Christians had expanded more widely in Roman society and were making their presence more obvious in imperial cities. Freed from the anxiety of sacrifice and the threat of persecution for several decades, Christians had been more willing to enter public careers and accept military conscription. Eusebius recorded that many brethren were holding offices and serving as soldiers by the reign of Diocletian. With more members and greater resources, some Christian groups had even begun to build the first conspicious places of public worship. Eusebius reported that the new houses of prayer—the *aulae ecclesiae* or "halls of the church" as they are called—were attracting large crowds in the major cities of the empire. Lactantius described one such church situated in plain sight of the imperial palace in Nicomedia. The growing presence of Christians in Roman society, and the increasing aversion of Christians to pagan religion convinced Diocletian that the Christian Church and the Roman Empire were incompatible.[20]

A number of famous incidents in the army and at court forced this conclusion upon the emperor. In the autocratic and regimented society of the Tetrarchy, many professions were becoming hereditary. The army was a case in point. In order to keep its forces at full strength, retiring soldiers were expected to bring a son or relative forward to replace themselves in the ranks. In March 295, the veteran Fabius Victor brought his son Maximilianus to the Numidian governor Dion. The young man was to be inspected, and, if found fit, conscripted into the legions for the upcoming north African campaigns of Maximian. However, while being inducted into service, he boldly announced: "I cannot serve; I cannot do evil. I am a Christian." The governor ignored him, and ordered that he be given the imperial *signum,* the idolatrous "dog tag" worn by Roman soldiers. Maximilian flinched back from the lictor attempting to give him the military badge, and said: "I am not a soldier for the world; I am a soldier for my God." The governor was indignant and urged Fabius to enlighten his lad—to no avail. Dion tried to persuade the Christian to accept the military sign. But Maximilian was adamant:

> I shall not put on the petty sign of the world *(signaculum saeculi),* and if you put it on me, I shall tear it off as it has no power over me. I am a Christian and may not wear that piece of lead now that the saving sign of my Lord Jesus Christ *(signum salutare Domini mei Jesu Christi)* has come, the sign of the Son of the living God, of whom you refuse to hear, who has suffered for our salvation, whom God gave for our sins. All we who are called Christians serve and follow him as the prince of life and bestower of salvation.

The governor debated patiently with Maximilian, even mentioning that some Christians were serving in the retinue of the emperors. Maximilian responded: "They know what is expedient for them. I am a Christian, however, and I cannot do evil." Finally, Dion threatened him with death if he did not accede to the requirements of the government.

Maximilian concluded his refusal by saying: "I shall not perish; for even if I depart from this world, my soul will live with Christ, my Savior." Maximilian was beheaded on the order of the governor. The emperors and their officials were not pleased with such opposition to military conscription in their endangered world. However, even more troubling was the resistance of veteran Christian soldiers to the revival of pagan rituals in the camps. The conversion of pagan soldiers and the conscription of Christian believers had increased the Christian presence in the army by the end of the third century. As long as these *fideles* were not forced to commit idolatry, many of them seemed willing to offer service to a state that was not persecuting their brethren. One such man was the centurion Marcellus, who fought with distinction in the north African campaigns of Maximian between 297 and 298. Yet at the conclusion of the campaigns and on the anniversary of the accession of the emperor in the spring of 298, religious rites and sacrifices were prescribed in the camps throughout North Africa. When it came time for Marcellus to sacrifice before the images of the pagan gods and ruling emperors, he threw down his centurion's staff and arms, and proclaimed:

> I am a soldier for Jesus Christ, the eternal sovereign. Henceforth, I shall no longer serve your emperors, and I refuse to adore your deities of wood and stone; for they are merely mute and deaf idols. If such are the conditions of service that we are compelled to offer sacrifices to gods and emperors, then… I renounce the military.

The initial refusal of continued service by Marcellus was on the grounds of idolatrous contamination. Yet, when he was given a chance to recant his action before a deputy prefect, he expressed the pacifist Christian aversion to bloodshed he had probably learned in his catechetical training: "I threw down my arms for it was not fitting that a Christian, who renders martial service for Christ the Lord, should render it by inflicting earthly injuries." This public confession of his Christian faith earned Marcellus a martyrdom through decapitation.[21]

An even more famous incident soon occurred at the court of Diocletian, and stirred the senior Augustus to action. In the aftermath of the Persian War and their triumphant return to Antioch in 299, Diocletian and Galerius were presiding over an *haruspicium* ceremony in which *haruspices* examined the entrails of sacrificial animals for signs predicting the future. This was an ancient ritual the Romans had inherited from the Etruscans many centuries earlier, and was a means of communing with the gods. Yet, on this occasion, the usual marks for interpreting the divine will were not discovered. Looking around, the chief soothsayer saw Christian palace workers marking their foreheads with the *immortale signum,* the cross of Christ, by which they felt they could protect themselves from the daemonic influences of this idolatrous rite. He blamed the lack of entrail marks on the Christians, who by employing their magic signs were hexing this ancient pagan practice. Diocletian was enraged at the rashness of Christians in interfering with imperial religious rituals. Encouraged by Galerius, the senior Augustus ordered palace workers to sacrifice to the pagan gods, or to receive a public whipping. He also commanded military officers to enforce ritual sacrifices in the army camps and to dismiss any soldiers who failed to comply. Lactantius reported that this was as far as Diocletian wished to go; but

Galerius, important pagan leaders, and other incidents over the next three years would push the senior emperor into a full-scale persecution.[22]

Galerius had entered the imperial college as the junior Caesar, and was always listed last in imperial documents.[23] While Constantius had quickly achieved military glory, had established his own official capital in the north-west, and received only nominal supervision from his seniors, Galerius had early been humiliated for a military mishap, had been moved around for years without a regular residence in the east, and undergone rigorous supervision from his Augustus. His Persian triumph changed things. Although it came last, it was arguably the greatest of the tetrarchic victories as it was over a major foreign power, and did not just recover but expanded Roman territory. It had proven that Galerius was an exceptional military commander, and had placed him on an equal footing with his colleagues as an imperial leader. Lactantius commented that the victory went to his head, and made him impatient with his status as a Caesar. Diocletian thereafter allowed him to have his own tetrarchic capital in and regional rule over the Danubian dioceses. Galerius made the best of this, constructing a grand triumphal arch and an elaborate palace in the heart of Thessalonica (*ca.* 299–303). He began to think about his role as a future Augustus and to plan how to become the dominant force in a second tetrarchy. He seems to have decided that taking the lead in a policy of persecution against the Christians might enhance his status. His mother Romula and prominent intellectuals supported him in this decision. His mother was a pagan priestess in Dacia, and often presided over religious rites in this region. She had developed an intense hatred of Christians for boycotting her festivals, and continually pestered her son to persecute them. Pagan intellectuals were becoming alarmed at the rising popularity of Christianity, and were writing strong critiques of Christian beliefs in this period. Porphyry of Tyre, a disciple of Plotinus and a Neoplatonic philosopher, published a vitriolic tract *Against the Christians,* which described their faith as a barbarous and inconsistent jumble of alien ideas, and attacked its followers as apostates from ancestral religion who endangered civilization and atheists who deserved death. Sossianus Hierocles, a high government official in the east, produced a similar work entitled *The Lover of Truth,* which compared Christ unfavorably with pagan cultic figures, and endeavored to call Christians back to the traditional religions of the Roman Empire. Other pagan philosophers and imperial officials supported the eastern Caesar in his desire to push Diocletian to stronger measures against Christianity.[24] Thus, while the other emperors and their military officers were merely discharging Christian soldiers unwilling to sacrifice in camp religious rites in their areas, Eusebius recorded that Galerius and his army commander were beginning to harm Christian soldiers in the Danube region. The *Acta Martyrum* preserved the names and deeds of some who were even martyred, including the famous Julius Veteranus. This veteran Christian had served loyally in the army for more than two decades, and fought bravely in seven campaigns before he was given the choice to sacrifice or perish. His response was: “No, since I am a Christian, I cannot do what you wish and deny the living and true God.” Julius and several other Christian veterans were martyred at Dorostorum in Moesia in 302.[25]

In the meantime, Diocletian—with Constantine at his side—was touring the southeastern provinces of the empire. While in Egypt he received reports of Manichean missionaries establishing conventicles across Roman North Africa. He was appalled at the dualistic doctrines and Persian practices of this sect, which he judged to be utterly

alien to ancestral Roman religion. He issued a fierce decree against the sect, declaring "it is wrong to…desert the ancient religion for some new one, for it is the height of criminality to try and revise doctrines that were settled once and for all by the ancients." He ordered that leading Manichees be burned alive with their scriptures, and that their followers be put to the sword or sent to the mines. On the trip back north during the autumn of 302, Diocletian witnessed a Christian deacon from Caesarea named Romanus disrupt the religious rituals which opened formal court proceedings. The senior emperor was most angry at this sacrilege, and he ordered that Romanus be jailed and that his tongue be cut out. When he reached Nicomedia in late 302, he was running out of patience with religious deviants, and was ready to hear the pleas of his Caesar for a Christian persecution.[26]

Galerius soon joined Diocletian in Nicomedia, and the two eastern emperors spent the winter of 302–3 discussing imperial policy concerning Christianity. The Augustus seems to have maintained that banning Christians from governmental and military positions might be enough to retain the support of the gods, and safeguard the interests of the state. The Caesar seems to have argued that Christians were dangerous subversives who should be utterly destroyed so that the tetrarchic revival of Roman religion could be completed. Diocletian pointed out that Christians had proved willing to die for their beliefs, and that a major persecution of them might produce more disorder in society than conformity in religion. Galerius, however, "was inflamed with a criminal passion," and pushed for the extermination of Christians. Diocletian sought the advice of the officials at his court. Many of these realized that Galerius might soon become the senior emperor in the east, and, wishing to stay in his good graces, they sided with the Caesar for a harsher policy. Diocletian decided to seek divine guidance on the issue, and sent a messenger to question the Oracle of Apollo at Didyma. A response came back saying that "the just upon the earth were preventing the god from speaking the truth." Diocletian asked his retinue whom these *iusti* might be? He was informed that Christians claimed to be "the just" or "the righteous" people of the earth. This was enough for the old Olympian devotee. He sincerely believed that Jupiter and his divine helpers had supported him and his imperial colleagues in overcoming chaos and restoring order in the Roman world. Now Christians were endangering the fragile peace of the new order not only by refusing to participate in the official religious rites upon which the *pax deorum* depended, but also by hexing and interrupting these essential rituals. He thus acceded to the demands of his Caesar for a persecution.[27]

The festival of the *Terminalia*—a ritual in honor of the god of boundaries—on 23 February 303 was selected as an appropriate date for the beginning of the persecution, which was aimed at the termination of the Christian religion. At dawn on that day, while the emperors were watching from the imperial palace, the prefect together with military officers and financial officials stormed the doors of the Christian church in Nicomedia. They collected the holy scriptures and burned them in fires, and they confiscated church treasures and distributed them as booty. Praetorian guardsmen then marched in with axes and iron implements, and leveled the lofty structure to the ground in a few hours. This symbolic action was executed under the provisions of the first edict against Christianity which was posted publicly in Nicomedia the next day. Lactantius and Eusebius reported that this edict ordered that churches be destroyed; that scriptures be burned; that Christians be deprived of all rank and dignity; and that they be stripped of their right to

bring actions in imperial courts, though they themselves could be sued and even tortured therein. Diocletian sent copies of the edict to Maximian and Constantius, ordering his colleagues to implement it in the western half of the empire. He seems to have hoped that by depriving the *Ecclesia* of its corporate material holdings and the *fideles* of their individual legal standings he would be able to destroy the Christian religion and restore the ancestral cults without resort to bloodshed. He was wrong. This edict was the beginning of the "Great Persecution" of the Christian Church, and another period of political convulsions in the Roman Empire. Lactantius judged this action as a turning point in the reign of Diocletian, commenting: "He ruled most successfully as long as he did not stain his hands with the blood of the righteous."[28]

Disorder and bloodshed, however, soon followed the publication of the first edict, and resulted in cycles of increasing violence over the next two years. Shortly after the edict had been posted, a distinguished Christian layman in Nicomedia ostentatiously pulled it down and tore it up. He was arrested, tortured, and burned alive by order of the emperors for his act of temerity. Thereafter, two mysterious fires broke out in the palace at Nicomedia. Galerius blamed them on a conspiracy of Christians and palace eunuchs aimed at harming the persecuting emperors. Lactantius thought that agents of Galerius actually set the fires; and Constantine later wrote of "lightning from heaven." Whatever the cause, Diocletian was suspicious and arrested and tortured numerous Christians in court service and from the local congregation. This incident produced several more martyrs, including the Bishop of Nicomedia, Anthimus, who was beheaded. In response to Christian disturbances in a few eastern cities during the summer of 303, Diocletian issued a harsher second edict that ordered the imprisonment of all Christian clergy. Jails were soon filled to overflowing and real criminals were being released. So, in the autumn, a third edict was issued which offered release and amnesty for clergy who would sacrifice publicly in the state cults. Officials often applied torture to gain compliance. Eusebius described how "a great many leaders of the Church eagerly endured terrible sufferings" and remained true to their confession; but how some others "weakened at the first onset" and offered sacrifices. He and Lactantius reported that repeated tortures, such as rakings, scrapings and scourgings, sometimes ended in death. Thus, pressure from Galerius, resistance from Christians, and his own imperious nature pushed Diocletian into a full-scale persecution. The western emperors enforced the first edict, but in different ways—revealing a first break in the unity of the imperial college. Maximian, as usual, followed the lead of Diocletian, allowing tortures and martyrdoms of recalcitrant Christians in his domains. Constantius, on the other hand, merely destroyed church buildings, but refrained from torturing Christian believers in his dioceses. By all accounts, he was the most mild in emotional temperament and the most liberal in religious views of the four sovereigns. Like the earlier Illyrian emperors Claudius Gothicus and Aurelian, and like many contemporary philosophers, he was probably a religious syncretist believing in a "Highest Divinity" who might alternately be identified as Olympian Jupiter, Sol Invictus, the Neoplatonic One, or even the Christian God. As long as the Christians served the state loyally and prayed for it assiduously, he saw no reason to cause public disorder by persecuting them.[29] Yet even with a mild application of the first edict in the Gallic regions, the Christian Church was once again a *religio illicita* as its corporate possessions were confiscated and its worship services were prohibited throughout the empire in the last two years of the First Tetrarchy (303–5).[30]

By the time the third edict was issued, Diocletian was traveling westward to Rome where he planned to meet Maximian for a celebration of the beginning of their *Vicennalia,* the “twentieth anniversary” of the accession of the Augusti, and the end of the *Decennalia,* the “tenth anniversary” of the rule of the Caesars. In the new order the real centers of power were the places where the emperors and their courts resided; but Rome was still the official capital of the Roman Empire. Though he had ruled from Nicomedia and the provinces, the senior Augustus had not entirely ignored the old capital—he had ordered the repair of the Senate House or *Curia* at the northwestern end of the Forum early in his reign; and he and Maximian had patronized the largest bath complex in Rome, the *Thermae Diocletianae,* in the northern part of the city late in their rule. In order to commemorate the joint visit of the Augusti, five triumphal columns were erected at the northwestern end of the Forum—a central one for Jupiter, the divine protector of the regime, and one for each of the emperors in the imperial college. The base and sculptural relief panels from the column of Constantius have survived, displaying in one panel a decennalia dedication, and depicting in the other three an imperial procession, a group of sacrificial animals, and the emperor sacrificing at an altar with the spirit of Rome, and the patron deities of the Caesars, Mars and Sol, in attendance (Ills. 11 and 12). On 20 November 303, Diocletian and Maximian participated in a magnificent procession down the *Via Sacra* and through the Roman Forum celebrating the tetrarchic victories around the empire; and offered sacrifices to Jupiter. They discussed affairs of state, and Diocletian seems to have exacted an oath from his old comrade to follow his lead when the time came to retire. Public games and festive banqueting occurred for a month thereafter, until Diocletian tired of the unruly manners of the Romans, abruptly left Rome, and went north to Ravenna to enter upon his next consulship on 1 January 304. During the winter he began his return journey to Nicomedia via the military roads beneath the Danube River. Along the way, Galerius prevailed upon him to issue a fourth edict against the Christians—ordering all subjects of the empire to offer sacrifices at public altars on pain of death for refusal. Lactantius and Eusebius described officials using the most terrible kinds of tortures to force compliance, and immolating large groups of resisting Christians in public fires. While the powers of the pagan state were bearing down upon the Christians, the



Ill. 11 View of the northwestern end of the Roman Forum with the base of one of the columns erected in front of the Curia for the Vicennalia of Diocletian still extant (303).



Ill. 12 Relief panel from the base of the Decennalia column of Constantius showing the Caesar sacrificing at an altar with Mars, Roma, and Sol in attendance (303).

storms of a violent winter were beating down upon Diocletian. During his arduous journey, Diocletian contracted a grave illness which he was not able to overcome. When he finally reached Nicomedia, he barely had enough strength to dedicate a new circus at the end of his vicennial celebrations in November 304. He thereupon disappeared into his palace, and rumors of his impending death circulated for months. Lactantius saw his illness as the vengeance of God for the persecution of the Christians.[31]

Galerius saw the declining health of Diocletian as a means of forcing the Augusti into retirement, and of setting himself up as the dominant member of a Second Tetrarchy. He knew that Constantius would have to be recognized as senior Augustus in the new imperial college. However, if he could get Diocletian to select new Caesars loyal to himself, he would control three quarters of the empire, and then would be able to oust or outlive the older Constantius, to replace him with an amenable partner, and ultimately to dominate the Second Tetrarchy as Diocletian had controlled the first one.

During the vicennial year of the Augusti, Galerius moved his capital northward to Serdica, and enlarged his forces along the Danube. These actions enabled him to more easily watch barbarian movements on the northern frontier, and more effectively impose his will on imperial colleagues within the empire. Late in 304 he met with Maximian, and threatened the western Augustus with dire consequences if he did not retire upon receiving orders for a new tetrarchy from the east. Then, in the early months of 305 he went to Nicomedia and urged his Jovian “father” to lay down the burdens of emperorship and take up the joys of retirement in the palace he had recently constructed at Spalatum on the coast of Dalmatia. Through a combination of kind concern for the state of his physical health and veiled threats about the use of military force, Galerius persuaded Diocletian to retire, and to order Maximian to do likewise. He promised to preserve the tetrarchic system of two senior and two junior emperors which Diocletian had so successfully implemented; but he insisted upon altering the choice of the new Caesars. Diocletian had allowed his western colleagues to expect that their sons would be given positions in a Second Tetrarchy—he had arranged the marriage of Maxentius to the daughter of Galerius, and had fostered the career of Constantine in the eastern courts. Galerius spoke against the appointment of either of them. He considered Maxentius to be a spoiled and incompetent prince, and despised his disrespectful manners. He considered Constantine to be a worthy and able candidate, but feared his independent spirit. He argued that he needed Caesars who would be loyal and obedient to him so that he could direct the imperial college as well as had Diocletian. He proposed an Illyrian commander and drinking companion named Severus for the western position, and his own nephew and personal bodyguard Maximin Daia for the eastern post. Diocletian disapproved of both nominees, but relented to the demands of his ambitious and overbearing Caesar—omninously warning “if any trouble follows, it will not be my fault.”[32]

On 1 May 305 at Nicomedia in Bithynia and at Milan in Italy before assemblies of their soldiers and officials, Diocletian and Maximian simultaneously announced their abdications from the imperial college, and the elevations of Galerius and Constantius as the new Augusti, and of Maximin Daia and Severus as the new Caesars in a Second Tetrarchy. Diocletian then retired to a lovely palace on the Adriatic Sea, and Maximian to a spacious villa in southern Italy.[33]

The western emperors obediently followed the orders of the senior Augustus who had created the tetrarchic system and given them honored positions within it. However, they

cannot have been pleased that they had been left out of the planning for and that their sons had been passed over in the succession to the Second Tetrarchy. Maxentius may not have ingratiated himself with the eastern emperors; but he was the son of an Augustus and the son-in-law of a Caesar. His exclusion from the new imperial college seemed prejudicial. Constantine, on the other hand, had distinguished himself in the service of the eastern emperors for a dozen years. His exclusion from the new imperial college seemed inexplicable.

When Constantius had become the western Caesar in 293, Constantine had been given the rank of a military tribune, and had been dispatched for service in the east. He probably had spent the next three years or so in the entourage of Diocletian, traveling under the Danube frontier from Sirmium in the west to Nicomedia in the east, and learning about the administration and defense of these regions. He probably had taken time to settle his mother in a convenient city of this area where he could watch over and keep contact with her—possibly at his own birthplace in Naissus, at the family home of Helena in Drepanum, or at the capital of Nicomedia. An early panegyric indicated that Constantine had taken a wife as soon as he left adolescence, and later sources gave her name as Minervina. The Caesar's son would be praised for avoiding the promiscuous pleasures of youth and for adopting instead the mature mind and uxorious spirit of a married man. He probably had settled his young bride in the same city as his mother. During this period, Constantine may have begun to further his education by gaining the acquaintance and attending the philosophical and rhetorical lectures of the Latin scholar Lactantius when the court had wintered at Nicomedia. While his father Constantius had been winning glory by the reconquest of Britain in the west, Constantine had been giving brave service in a military campaign against barbarians on the Danube (296). Through the probity of his personal life and the quality of his professional service, Constantine had earned the esteem of Diocletian. When the senior emperor had answered the request of his Caesar for help on the eastern frontier, Constantine had gone with him. The report in the *Origo* that he had "fought bravely in Asia" under Diocletian and Galerius, and his own reminiscence that he had visited the ruins of Babylon, indicate that he had served in the Persian War—first with Diocletian in Syria (297), and then with Galerius through Mesopotamia (298–99). Since Constantine does not appear to have gone to Antioch with the emperors, he probably had helped lead troops back to the Danube frontier in the aftermath of the Persian War, and had spent some time visiting his wife and mother. His only child with Minervina, his first son Crispus, had been born about this time (*ca.* 300). His wife had died not long afterwards, and Helena probably had taken charge of the rearing of her grandchild as Constantine was often occupied with military duties. He probably had served in the early campaigns of Galerius along the Danube, but he had soon been recalled to the court of Diocletian. He seems to have been promoted to the position of *tribunus ordinis primi* (Tribune of the first rank) about this time, and to have been treated with special favor by Diocletian. Eusebius later remembered that he had seen Constantine standing at the right hand of Diocletian as they rode through Palestine on a tour to Egypt (301–2). The Christian historian had been impressed by the stature and physical strength, and by the intelligence and natural grace of the future emperor. After inspecting Egypt, and visiting the ruins of Memphis, Constantine had returned with Diocletian to Nicomedia for the winter of 302–3. If his opinion had been requested during the debates over the Christians, he probably had expressed doubt about the

wisdom of the persecution policy which Galerius was pushing. Years later, he recalled being at the palace in Nicomedia when the oracular response against "the righteous" had been reported, and he criticized the "sanguinary edicts" which had been issued against the "worshipers of God"—a savage policy he came to feel was utterly wrong. As Galerius pushed for a harsher persecution and schemed for greater power over the next two years, he came to view Constantius and his son as obstacles to his political ambitions and religious policies. So, while he was forcing the senior emperors to accept his arrangements for the Second Tetrarchy, he made a number of subtle attempts to get rid of Constantine. Several sources report that he exposed his colleague's son to "dangers" and "snares," hoping to kill him without arousing suspicion and causing war. Under the pretense of military exercise, he forced Constantine to fight wild animals in an arena—but his human prey emerged from the contest in better condition than the wild beasts. Along the Danube frontier, he ordered Constantine to lead a cavalry charge through a swamp against Sarmatians—yet the brave tribune succeeded not only in leading his men to victory in rough terrain, but also in grabbing a ferocious barbarian by the hair and dragging him back to the feet of the startled emperor. Constantine had saved himself from the plots of Galerius and proved himself worthy of an imperial position. Lactantius sensed that "the hand of God" was protecting him for a future mission.[34]

His current position and any future mission, however, were endangered by the success of the political machinations and religious policies of Galerius. The new Tetrarchy which Diocletian announced in 305 furthered the political aims of the eastern Jovians over the dynastic hopes of the western Herculians, and favored the brutal persecution of Galerius over the tolerant policies of Constantius. Whether convinced by reason or forced by coercion, Diocletian had assented to the demands of his eastern Caesar against the interests of his western colleagues. In so doing, he allowed Galerius to disturb the stability of the tetrarchic system, and destroy the peace of the new order. Neither Constantius nor Maximian were satisfied with the situation. Within a year and a half, they would both support bids for power by their sons. In the ensuing struggles for imperial dominance, Galerius and the forces of paganism would go down to defeat while Constantine and the cause of Christianity would rise up to victory.[35]

IV
THE GALLIC EMPEROR AND THE DYING PERSECUTORS

> For not only is the appearance of your father seen in you, Constantine, but also his temperance, his bravery, his justice, and his wisdom.
>
> *Panegyricus* VI (VII). 3. 4

As the spring of 305 came to an end, Constantine found himself in an extremely vulnerable position. His original imperial mentor Diocletian had abdicated from power, and had departed from the east for retirement at Spalatum. His new imperial master Galerius had blocked his participation in a Second Tetrarchy, and had placed loyal comrades as Caesars in Antioch and Milan to buttress his position between them. Although Constantius was the nominal senior Augustus in the revised imperial college, he was politically isolated in the west. Though Constantine was a military officer in the Roman army, he was physically endangered in the east. It appeared that Galerius had become the new lord of the Roman world. However, the paternal concern of Constantius to save his son, and the political ambition of Constantine to succeed his father, would soon destroy the designs of Galerius for imperial domination.[1]

Lactantius was still in the east in 305, and he later painted a vivid portrait of Galerius as a brutal tyrant. After having prodded Diocletian and Maximian from power, Galerius then "considered himself to be the sole master of the whole world." Although he had to recognize Constantius as co-Augustus, "he disdained him because of his mild nature and ill health." He began to act like a Persian autocrat, and "turned his mind to harassing the world which he had opened up for himself." He not only continued to slaughter Christian believers by "fire, cross, and wild beasts," but he even began to deprive pagan citizens of legal rights and to employ tortures in civil cases. He ordered a new census, and sent government officials into cities and farms like an invading army into conquered territories. For Lactantius, Galerius was a *bestia mala,* "an evil beast" unfit to serve as a Roman ruler. The Christian rhetorician used this term both literally and symbolically. He described the eastern emperor as a brutal beast of a man. He was tall of stature and big of body, a corpulent man and an imposing figure. He exhibited a natural barbarity and a wildness alien to Roman character for he disdained literature and the fine arts, and instead collected wild bears to which he fed his enemies with cruel delight. Galerius also seemed to be the perfect embodiment of the "purple beast" of whom John the Seer had warned the faithful in the Apocalypse. He was an evil ruler who misused his God-given power to harass his subjects and harm the righteous, and thus acted as an agent of Satan.[2]

Several ancient writers characterized Constantine as a virtual hostage and an endangered man while he served in the retinue of Galerius at this time. Galerius had

deliberately humiliated Constantine by ostentatiously brushing him aside and bringing Maximin forward when the new tetrarchy had been announced at Nicomedia in May 305. It was probably in the months before and after this event that he was exposing the popular prince to dangers in military camps and on frontier campaigns in attempts to dispose of him. Constantius cannot have been unaware of the dangerous situation of his son, and did not wait long before he intervened to rescue him.[3]

Constantius and Constantine had been separated for a dozen years since the First Tetrarchy had been established in 293. As the western Caesar, Constantius had won several significant military victories against imperial enemies, had gained a reputation for mild rule among his subjects, and had started a new family with his second wife Theodora. Yet, none of these children had even reached their teens as old age and ill health began to worry the new western Augustus. If he were to have a dynastic successor, his hopes would have to rest upon Constantine, his only child from Helena. As a Caesar's son, Constantine had been trained for an imperial role at the eastern courts, had given courageous service in military campaigns, and had won a following in the eastern armies—many of whose soldiers were openly disappointed that he had been left out of the Second Tetrarchy. Constantine was thirty-two years old, and both fully qualified and truly desirous to be an emperor in 305. However, he knew that his imperial ambitions—and probably his very life—depended on his father in the west.[4]

Constantius ostensibly accepted the eastern decisions for the structure of the Second Tetrarchy. Just as Galerius adopted Maximin into the Jovian Dynasty with the official nomenclature of Galerius Valerius Maximinus Noble Caesar, Constantius adopted Severus into the Herculian Dynasty with the official name of Flavius Valerius Severus Noble Caesar. Galerius continued to use Jupiter and Sol, and Hercules and Mars as the tutelary deities for the tetrarchs on the gold coins in the east; but Constantius dropped Mars and adopted Sol for his Caesar—possibly showing a little independence from Galerius and displaying a personal preference for that god. However, rather than moving to the Augustan capital of Milan in Italy as Galerius took over the Augustan residence of Nicomedia in Bithynia, Constantius wisely chose to remain at Trier—just adding the Hispanic diocese to his Gallic and Britannic territories to signal his status as senior western emperor. He was popular in the northwestern provinces, and would have a better chance to engineer a dynastic succession there. His actions lulled Galerius into a false security.[5]

Shortly after the new tetrarchy had been established, Constantius sent a letter to Galerius requesting "that he send his son Constantine back to him since he had not seen him for such a long time." The eastern Augustus, of course, did not wish to comply. However, the request was repeated, and Galerius had no legitimate excuses for not honoring the paternal wishes of the western Augustus. Constantius was technically the senior emperor in the new tetrarchy, and he had served the new order loyally and effectively for over a dozen years. His son Constantine had likewise served the eastern emperors loyally and honorably for many years, and he certainly deserved to see his ailing father in the west. After a long evening in his cups, Galerius finally relented, and gave Constantine his imperial seal and told the prince he might depart the next morning with formal travel orders. Lactantius suggested that Galerius intended to reverse his decision and retain Constantine at his court, or to send a message ahead to Severus and detain Constantine in Italy.[6]

Knowing of Galerius' habit of revoking decisions made during a night of drinking, Constantine did not wait till the following morning to take his leave. Armed with the imperial *sigillum* the emperor had given him, he made a hasty departure from the eastern court that very evening—probably early in the summer of 305. Displaying the dazzling celerity and tactical agility which marked many of his later actions, Constantine raced across Europe to escape the evil designs of Galerius and reach the safe domains of Constantius. He rode on horseback at incredible speed along the Roman roads, changing mounts every few miles at the imperial post houses. He hamstrung or killed the horses left behind to outrun the agents of Galerius, and took the harder route across the Alps rather than the easier way through northern Italy to avoid capture by Severus. His dramatic flight for freedom and bid for power ended successfully in a short time when he reached his father at the Gallic port of Bononia (Boulogne) as he was embarking for a military campaign in Britain.[7]

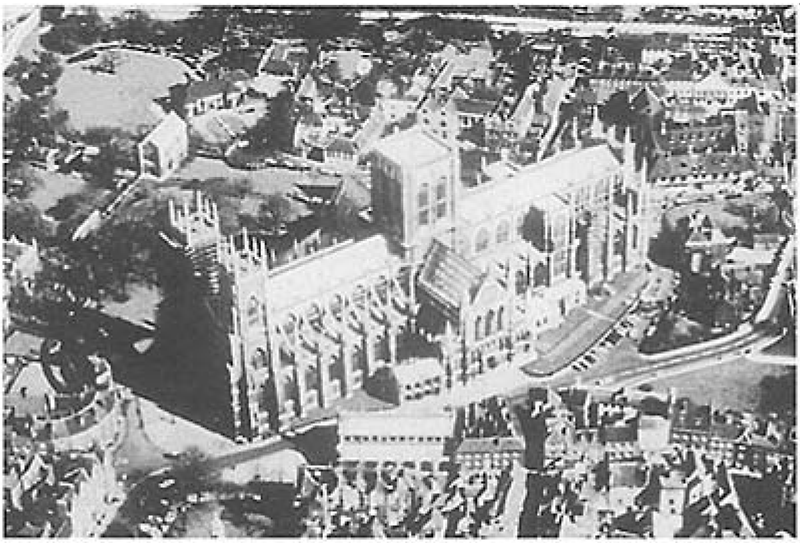
Having reached Constantius in the summer of 305, Constantine was able to spend a full year serving at the side of his father. Already ill when Constantine arrived, Constantius probably gave his son leadership roles in the successful campaign they waged against the barbarian Picts in the summer and autumn, and in the reconstruction work they oversaw at military fortifications and urban centers in northern Britain in the following spring and summer—the mile castles on Hadrian's Wall and the multangular towers of York's legionary fortress reveal work from this period.[8] During this year, Constantine got to observe the different spirit with which his father applied the tetrarchic system of government in his northwestern provinces with what he had seen under Diocletian and Galerius in the eastern provinces. Certainly, Constantius introduced most of the political, military, administrative, economic, and cultural reforms of the new order; but he did so in a manner which seemed less autocratic and more beneficial to his subjects. He employed his enlarged army to aggressively beat back the enemies of the state just as his co-rulers did; but he seems to have used his expanded bureaucracy more earnestly to nurture the economic recovery of his subjects than to enrich the coffers of the government as they were accused of doing. Christian and pagan, Constantinian and post-Constantinian sources all agreed on his fair and mild rule, with Eusebius reporting that "Constantius alone governed his people with a mild and tranquil sway, and exhibited towards them a truly parental and fostering care"; and Eutropius likewise recording that

> he was an outstanding and exceptionally gracious man who showed concern for the wealth of the provincials and private individuals instead of simply pursuing the interests of the treasury.… He was not only loved but also revered by the Gauls, especially because through his government they had escaped the mistrusted prudence of Diocletian and the bloody rashness of Maximian.

Constantine probably noticed that his father had only applied the first persecution edict against the Christians, and that he seemed to feel that they could be included in an imperial cult focused on a *Deus Summus*. If Constantius gave any advice before his death to Constantine, it was probably "combat your enemies fiercely, and nurture your subjects gently." Though Constantine would accept much of the imperial system as he had learned

it at the side of Diocletian, he would adapt and apply it in the spirit of his father when he attained imperial rule in his own right.[9]

The moment when Constantine gained imperial power came in mid-summer of the year 306. The health of his father had been failing for over a year, and after his final military campaign against the Picts, Constantius had set up residence with his family and court at *Eboracum* (York) in northeastern Britain—long a military base, and lately a capital city for one of the provinces into which the island had been divided in the new administrative system. Surrounded by family and officials, Constantius handed to Constantine the symbols of imperial power and bequeathed to him the rule of the western provinces. He died a happy man, knowing that he had spoiled the ambitious designs of the brutal Galerius and had ensured the imperial succession for his beloved son. Constantine put on his father's purple vestments, and appeared before his father's assembled army at the *principia* in York. Led by the Alamannic king Crocus who had recently been defeated by and taken service under Constantius, the troops proclaimed the oldest son of the late



Ill. 13 Aerial of the medieval York Minster atop the Roman *principia* where Constantine was proclaimed Emperor in 306.

ruler the new *Imperator* and *Augustus,* elevating Constantine to imperial rule over the Gallic west. The date when Constantine was made emperor was 25 July 306—the date from which he would reckon the beginning of his rule and upon which he would celebrate the anniversaries of his accession. The place where Constantine was saluted emperor is now largely covered by the late Gothic Cathedral of St. Peter in York—but under the south transcept of the Minster one can examine the foundations of the military

headquarters building at this site, and across the street one can inspect an ancient column from the basilican hall of this complex before which the only legitimate acclamation of a Roman emperor ever occurred in Britain (Ills. 13 and 14).[10]

With the bequest of his late father and the backing of the western armies, there could be little question about the legitimacy or solidity of Constantine's imperial position. Nevertheless, since Galerius was now the senior Augustus in the imperial college, Constantine sent a formal account of his acclamation as Augustus and a laureled image of himself as emperor to his eastern colleague so that he might receive official recognition from the other emperors. Galerius was so enraged with this information that he almost burned the hateful image and the hapless messenger who had brought it. His advisors dissuaded him from this rash action, pointing out that many eastern soldiers were openly dissatisfied with the exclusion of Constantine from the Second Tetrarchy and might eagerly flock to his side in a civil war. Galerius had



Ill. 14 A column from the basilican hall of the Roman military headquarters across from the Minster in York.

little choice but to accept the *fait accompli*—however, he did so in a way which emphasized his dominant position. He sent a purple vestment to Constantine "so that it might seem that he had adopted him into partnership of his own accord." He then promoted Severus to the rank of Augustus, and named Constantine a Caesar "in order to demote him from the second to the fourth place" in the imperial hierarchy. Constantine wisely accepted this decision, and soon appeared on imperial coinage as Flavius Valerius Constantinus the Noble Caesar.[11]

During the early months of his reign, Constantine took actions to consolidate his rule in the northwestern dioceses and to prove himself a worthy successor to his father. Like all new emperors, he had imperial sculptors make busts of his visage which were to be erected in capital cities and military camps, and he had mint workers stamp coins with his profile which were to be circulated throughout his domains. These ubiquitous portraits would reveal the resemblance of Constantine to Constantius, and acquaint his subjects with their new emperor. Before leaving Britain, he completed the reconstruction of military bases begun by his father, and he ordered the repair of Roman roadways on his own initiative. He swiftly earned the respect of his civilian officials and military officers, and these men probably commissioned the large statue of Constantine which was erected in front of the *principia* in York to commemmorate his acclamation there. The head of this impressive statue has survived the ravages of time, and is on display in the Yorkshire Museum which is located only a few yards outside the great southwest bastion of the military base wall. This bastion is popularly known as the multangular tower and may be one of the last projects of Constantius. The head of his son in the museum may be one of the earliest portraits of Constantine. Although weather-worn and damaged, it shows the new emperor with a full head of hair, a high forehead, large eyes and a prominent nose, a strong jaw and neck—the rugged heir of an Illyrian soldier emperor ready to rule in the Roman Empire (Ills. 15 and 16).[12]

Constantine only spent a short time in Britain before returning to the tetrarchic capital of *Augusta Treverorum* (Trier). His stepmother and half-siblings, and key civilian officials, were deposited there while the new emperor with his generals and troops advanced east to the Rhine where barbarian Franci had taken advantage of Constantius' absence to raid Roman territory.

Constantine swiftly drove them back across the river, slaughtered many of them, and captured two of their kings—Ascaricus and Merogaisus. The two chieftains and some warriors were fed to beasts in the amphitheater as part of the *adventus* celebrations at Trier when Constantine took up residence in the city during the winter of 306–7. He then initiated an expansion of the work of his father in transforming Trier from a frontier colony into an imperial capital. Constantius probably had strengthened the circuit wall of the city with military towers and fortified gates, similar to the *porta nigra,* and certainly had erected the core of a palace complex at the northeast end of the city.



Ill. 15 Exterior of the "Multangular Tower"—the southwestern corner bastion of Constantinian York.



Ill. 16 Head of Constantine from an imperial statue in front of the *principia* in York (Yorkshire Museum).

A little to the south of the imperial residence, Constantine ordered the construction of a large *aula palatina,* or formal audience hall for imperial ceremonies. It would be built in the form of a longitudinal basilica terminating in an apse. At 67 meters in length, 27.5 meters in width, and 30 meters in height, it was an imposing structure wherein the emperor could sit on a raised dais under a glorification arch in the apse and preside over judicial appeals and formal ceremonies before a multitude of his assembled subjects. Several blocks to the south of this, he had his architects begin work on



Ill. 17 Aerial view of Trier, the Gallic capital of Constantine situated on the right bank of the Moselle River.

a massive imperial *thermae,* or bathhouse. Over a 100 meters wide and 200 meters long, it was built to service several thousand people at a time, and rival the majestic imperial baths in Rome. Constantine probably ordered repairs for the *amphitheater* and expansion of the circus at the northeastern end of the city in which thousands of his subjects could be entertained by beast fights and chariot races. Within a few years, the city located on the east bank of the Moselle River and surrounded by a 6-kilometer circuit wall took on the veneer of a great imperial capital (Ills. 17–20). Like his father, Constantine would patronize building projects at many sites throughout his domains in the coming years, most notably at Autun in central and Arles in southern Gaul.[13]

The aggressive response to barbarian incursions and the active policy of building projects in the early months of his reign assured the new subjects of Constantine that they had a worthy heir and a competent successor to Constantius. A pagan panegyrist at Trier would soon comment favorably on the similarity between imperial father and son, saying “not only is the physical appearance of your father seen in you, Constantine, but also his temperance, bravery, justice, and wisdom.” Eusebius likewise noticed how the outward

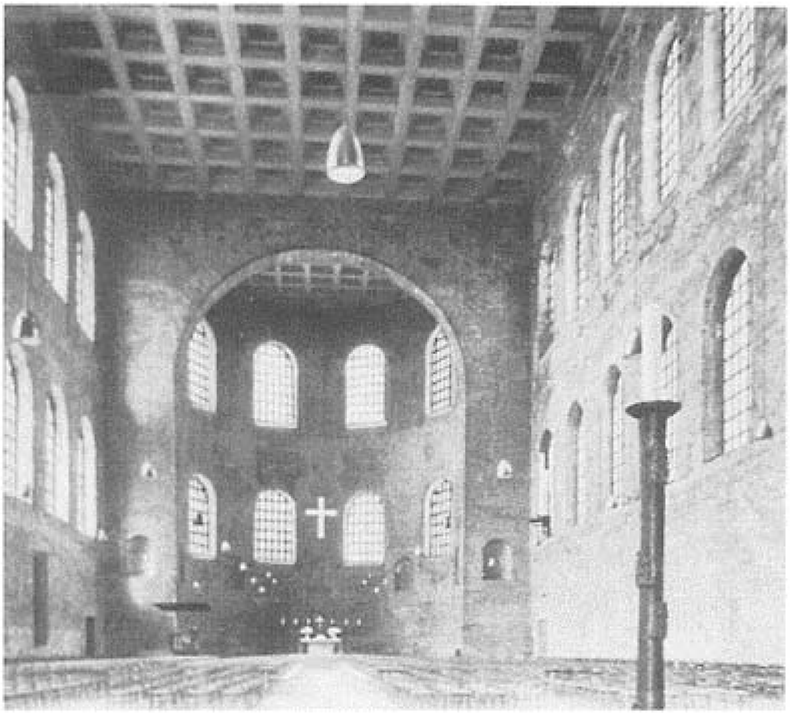
dignity and internal virtues of Constantius seemed to be reflected in Constantine, and later wrote that on coming to power he “presented to all a renewal, as it were, in his own person, of his father’s ife and reign.”[14]



Ill. 18 Amphitheater at Trier carved into the hills above the east end of the city where Constantine held games.



Ill. 19 Exterior of the northern apse and western side of the palace audience hall of Constantine at Trier.



Ill. 20 Interior of the *aula palatina* at Trier (306–10).

Constantine also quickly revealed that he was prepared to follow, and even to further, the tolerant policies which his father had employed toward Christianity. Lactantius, who had lost his teaching position at the start of the "Great Persecution" under Diocletian and had begun to fear for his life with its intensification by Galerius, seems to have fled from the dangers of Nicomedia to the safety of Trier by 306. He had probably reached the Gallic capital when the newly acclaimed Constantine arrived from Britain. He later asserted that as soon as Constantine had assumed imperial power he "did nothing earlier than restore the Christians to their cult and their God." As only the senior Augustus could issue legislation for the whole empire, the reported action of Constantine in favor of the Christians could have been nothing more than an executive order to imperial officials under his authority to allow Christians in his dioceses to resume worship without molestation. The western Caesar was certainly not a believing Christian at this time, and his action probably included no official financial support for the Church. However, like Gallienus, Claudius Gothicus, and Constantius, he seems to have concluded that toleration of the Christian religion was a better policy than assaults on the Christian Church. The former at least seemed to gain Christian service for the Roman state while the latter only seemed to cause bloody chaos in Roman society. Constantine had probably encountered Christians in the army before the persecution, and judged them to be brave and honorable men. He had probably attended some of the lectures of Lactantius in

Nicomedia, and found him to be a learned and fascinating teacher whether expounding upon classical philosophy and rhetoric or Christian theology and ethics. The fact that Galerius had tried to harm Constantine at the same time that he was attempting to destroy the Christians may have helped the young emperor identify with the persecuted. He was not one of them, but he hated the "great persecutor" almost as much as they did. His policy of toleration was more a slap in the face of Galerius than a sign of interest in the cult of the Christians. Yet, this very stance opened him up to Christian influences. Christian clergy could visit his court and Christian laity could serve his government without fear. Lactantius even dedicated the great *opus* he was writing at this time in defense of Christian beliefs and practices—his *Divinae Institutiones*—to Constantine. He predicted that the supreme Deity would reward him for his rightous actions, but would punish the other evil emperors for their wicked ways. It is doubtful whether Constantine knew or cared much about Christianity at this point in his life and career. He simply wished to distinguish himself from Galerius and his minions. Though he had been accepted by the eastern Augustus as an official member of the Second Tetrarchy, and would use many of the reforms of the new order, Constantine, nevertheless, swiftly set himself apart from his imperial colleagues by his governing style and his religious policies. Galerius had judged the character of the young man correctly, and gauged the consequences of his imperial elevation accurately.[15]

Galerius was not pleased that Constantine had gained an imperial position—but he was somewhat mollified in hearing that the western prince would humbly accept a junior rank in the imperial college, and in knowing that he would carefully defend the northwestern provinces of the Roman Empire. The senior emperor was even less pleased when he shortly learned of a usurpation in Rome. Maxentius, who was jealous that the son of his father's Caesar had become an emperor while he was still a private citizen, took advantage of discontent in the old capital to get himself proclaimed emperor. Galerius had recently ordered the next quinquennial census which had been instituted by Diocletian, and, for the first time, the citizens of Rome itself were to be taxed. The Roman people were not happy with this action. Galerius had also expedited the disbanding of the old Praetorian Guard in line with the policies of his Illyrian predecessors, and was replacing them with new imperial protector units at the regional tetrarchic capitals. The praetorian remnant was not happy with their diminished numbers and influence. Playing upon these dissatifications, Maxentius bribed some soldiers to kill the local officials serving Severus, and to prod the Praetorians and the people to invest him with the purple and salute him as *imperator* on 28 October 306.[16]

Galerius hated Maxentius, and had deliberately excluded him from the Second Tetrarchy because he judged that he was unworthy of imperial office and disrespectful to his elders. Constantine seemed better qualified for an emperorship, had filled a vacant spot in the tetrarchic government, and had accepted Caesarian rank. Maxentius, on the other hand, was attempting to overthrow the official western Augustus or to create a fifth position in the imperial college. The eastern Augustus did not wish to accept such a military *coup d'état,* or to upset the symmetry of the tetrarchy. He thus refused to recognize Maxentius as an imperial colleague, and ordered Severus to march from Milan to Rome, and depose the usurper. Realizing the danger of his position, Maxentius dispatched a purple robe to his father Maximian and saluted him as Augustus for the second time. The old emperor had been unhappy with his forced retirement, gladly

accepted the salutation, and joined his son in Rome. Most of the soldiers whom Severus led to the capital in early 307 had previously served under Maximian, and felt more loyalty to him than to the creature of Galerius. With exhortations from Maximian and bribes from Maxentius, many were soon deserting Severus and joining the side of Maxentius. Severus had no choice but to flee for his life with a few loyal guards, and to take refuge in Ravenna. Maximian marched to the north, besieged the city of Ravenna, and offered terms to Severus—deposition from office for the sparing of his life. The deserted emperor surrendered, and handed back the imperial purple to the man from whom he had received it less than two years earlier. He was taken back to the capital, and placed under guard in a public villa at the thirtieth milestone of the Via Appia south of Rome.[17]

While this political turmoil was convulsing Italy, Constantine wisely departed Gaul and visited Britain in the spring and summer of 307. He presumably needed to examine the road construction projects he had ordered the previous year, and wished to exhibit his continuing concern for the welfare of his subjects. He also probably wanted to remain neutral in the usurpation affair. Although he had political and familial connections to Maximian, he had been recognized by Galerius as a legitimate member of the imperial college. It was in his best interests for the moment to stay out of the fray, and let the senior emperor deal with the overthrow of his co-Augustus. Galerius was occupied with a campaign against the Sarmatians along the Danube during the winter and spring of 306–7; but when he learned of the surrender of Severus, he began preparations to lead an armed force against the usurpers in Rome.[18]

Fearing retribution from the brutal Galerius, who had rejected their diplomatic overtures, the Herculians took precautions to fortify their position during the spring and summer of 307. They ordered the construction workers of Rome to double the height of the formidable Aurelian Wall which surrounded the city for a length of 18 kilometers. While Maxentius man-aged this immense project and organized defense plans, Maximian traveled north to Gaul and sought help from Constantine. Just as he had earlier married his older daughter Theodora to Constantius and elevated him to imperial status, he would now offer to espouse his younger daughter Fausta to Constantine and promote him to Augustan rank. He hoped thereby to reaffirm the family alliance and gain some support for the Herculian cause in Italy. As a widower who had left his only son in the care of his mother Helena in the east, and as an emperor who had been acclaimed Augustus by the troops in the northwest, Constantine saw advantages in accepting the offers of Maximian. A lovely bride of imperial lineage would be a public asset and better the chances of a dynastic succession. A public promotion from the former Augustus would reverse the Galerian demotion and strengthen his imperial position. Constantine therefore welcomed the old emperor and his comely daughter to Trier. In a festive double ceremony performed in September of 307, Maximian gave the hand of Fausta in marriage to Constantine and raised the Caesar of Gaul to the rank of Augustus. The first of the five extant Latin panegyrics composed by Gallic orators for Constantine was recited on this occasion. The pagan rhetor praised the youth and vigor of Constantine, and the physical attributes and cardinal virtues he had received from his father; and he extolled the maturity and wisdom of Maximian, and the military victories and imperial governance he had given his subjects. He posited that the current state of the commonwealth required the resumption of power and the wise counsel of Maximian, and the elevation in rank and

the strong arm of Constantine. He concluded with a prayer to the deified Constantius who gazed down happily from the heavens seeing that the empire was again being guided by Herculians in harmony, and knowing that it would long be ruled in the future by his progeny. There was more rhetoric than reality in this panegyric given by an orator more familiar with the tetrarchic partnership of Maximian and Constantius than the ambitious plans of Constantine. The astute young emperor was quite willing to accept a prestigious bride and an imperial promotion from Maximian. However, the most he would offer in return was political recognition and military neutrality.[19]

At the time the nuptials were being celebrated in Gaul, Galerius was leading his army into Italy. As he marched down the peninsula, Maxentius had Severus murdered in order that Galerius might not use his deposed colleague as a rallying point for tetrarchic legitimacy. Upon reaching Latium, the angry Augustus set up camp along the Tiber River near Rome. Galerius threatened the Senate and people with destruction unless they deserted the usurper and accepted his authority. However, he found the gates of the capital tightly locked, the ramparts of the wall heavily guarded, and the people of the city loyal to Maxentius. The eastern emperor had never visited Rome, and he had underestimated the size of the old capital and the strength of the Aurelian Wall. He did not have the forces necessary to fully surround and completely besiege the city. He tried to negotiate with Maxentius; but now his son-in-law rebuffed his overtures, and soon began to bribe his soldiers. Fearing the fate of Severus, Galerius retreated north on the Flaminian Way, allowing his troops to pillage and destroy the fields and towns along the route.[20]

Constantine, in the meantime, began to advertise his Augustan rank and to recognize his Herculian allies on the coins of his mints; but he declined the request of Maximian to attack the Galerian army as it retreated over the Alps.

Constantine would prove to be the most astute politician among the various emperors competing for power during the following years. He gave political recognition to both the Herculian usurpers in the west and to the Jovian tetrarchs of the east; but he offered military assistance to neither side. Instead, he employed his troops to defeat Germanic tribes along the Rhine and preserve peace in his provinces. During the campaign season of 308, he raided the territory of the Bructeri, and began a bridge on the Rhine at Cologne. In 310, he marched to the northern reaches of the river, and fought against the Franci. In between, he played the role of a benevolent ruler who reconstructed the cities, fostered the economy, and cultivated the arts in Gaul. As Maxentius quarreled with his father and botched his rule of Italy and Africa, and Galerius failed to maintain control of the imperial college, Constantine consolidated his power in the northwest and gained popularity throughout the empire.[21]

Maximian returned to Rome in the winter of 307–8, and found Maxentius very proud that he had survived the invasion of Galerius without the presence of his father or the aid of his brother-in-law—blithely disregarding that Maximian had planned the overall defense of the city and had gained the military neutrality of Constantine. Herculian father and son soon fell out over their respective imperial roles. Maximian viewed himself as the senior emperor with real power while Maxentius treated his father as an advisor and figurehead. The old emperor forced the issue before an assembly of the people and soldiers of the city in the spring of 308, and was embarrassed to see the crowd side with his haughty son. He had no choice but to leave Italy in disgrace and to flee to the court of

his new son-in-law in Gaul. In the aftermath of the expulsion of Maximian from Italy, Valerius Alexander, a vicar over the north African provinces since 303, revolted against Maxentius and was saluted Augustus. He held several African provinces, and gained control of Sardinia and the seas between Italy and Africa for the next year (308–9).[22]

By the autumn of 308, the new tetrarchy which Galerius had hoped to dominate was in shambles, and there were six men claiming to be emperors in the Roman world. The coinage from mid-307 to late 308 reflected the political convulsions of the time. After the marriage of Constantine to Fausta and the failure to oust Maxentius, Galerius and Maximin only recognized each other as legitimate rulers, and for a few months dropped Constantine from their coins. They also replaced the long-standing inscription on the bronze coinage dedicated to the GENIO POPULI ROMANI with new inscriptions celebrating the GENIO IMPERATORIS and the GENIO CAESARIS—the “Genius of the Emperor” and the “Genius of the Caesar.” The support of the old capital for the usurper Maxentius had apparently shaken the confidence of the eastern emperors in the “Genius of the Roman People.” Through this uneasy period Constantine continued to present Galerius and Maximin as his legitimate eastern colleagues on the money of his mints; and to depict his benefactor Maximian as a western Augustus on his coinage. The expulsion of Maximian from Italy and the revolt in Africa gave him an excuse to drop Maxentius from his coins; he never put Alexander on them. Constantine also continued to honor the Olympian gods of tetrarchic theology and the divine spirit of the Roman people on his coinage. His numismatic diplomacy and military neutrality soon aided him in regaining recognition from the eastern emperors.[23]

Lactantius saw the political turmoil of the time as the “judgment of God” against the evil policies of Galerius. The eastern Augustus soon began to doubt the wisdom of his own judgment, and decided to seek the advice and prestige of his Jovian “father” and mentor to help him restore stability to the Second Tetrarchy. He therefore requested Diocletian to meet him at the military base of Carnuntum on the upper Danube. Maximian, who was angry with his son in Italy and unhappy with his role in Gaul, joined his former imperial colleagues there as well. He apparently tried to persuade Diocletian to resume the purple with him. However, the old eastern Augustus waxed eloquent on the joys of retirement and the size of his cabbages at Spalatum. He and Galerius urged Maximian to retire once again, and add his authority to their plan to appoint a new Augustus to take the place of Severus and restore symmetry to the imperial college. Thus, at the Council of Carnuntum on 11 November 308 the Second Tetrarchy was reconstituted with the elevation of a loyal military companion and trusted Illyrian officer of Galerius as Augustus of the west—Gaius Valerius Licinianus Licinius. Galerius remained the senior Augustus in the east, and moved his court back to Thessalonica; Maximin Daia remained the eastern Caesar, and resided at Antioch or Caesarea Maritima. Licinius became the official Augustus of the west, and would set up court at Sirmium and plan to overthrow Maxentius and restore Italy and Africa to tetrarchic rule; Constantine was recognized again as Caesar of the northwest, and resided at Trier. Maximian agreed to retire once again, and return to Gaul. Maxentius and Alexander were treated as usurpers.[24]

The decisions made at the Council of Carnuntum allowed Galerius to hope that he finally had a college of emperors which he could control and through which he could govern the Roman world. Before departing the upper Danube region, he started a major

reclamation project in Pannonia to clear forests and drain Lake Pelso in order to open up more farm land in the area—the Latin historian Aurelius Victor, who later served as a governor in Pannonia Secunda, praised the value of this work for the people and economy of the empire. Galerius left Licinius at Sirmium with instructions to see this project to completion, and to begin military operations against Maxentius in Italy. The senior Augustus then moved to the lower Danube, and presumably sent instructions to his colleagues to defend the frontiers, nurture the economy, and prosecute the persecution of Christians in their areas. Over the next year and a half, Galerius was able to claim some military successes: Constantine completed construction of a bridge across the Rhine, and campaigned against the Franks (309–10); Licinius reconquered Istria on the Adriatic from Maxentius (309), and gained a victory over the Sarmatians on the Danube (310); Galerius himself campaigned victoriously against the Carpi along the lower Danube (309); and Maximin inflicted defeat upon some Persian frontier forces (310). Like the members of the First Tetrarchy, the four rulers of this imperial team shared each others' victory titles. They also extended the programs of their predecessors for the recultivation of abandoned lands, and the reconstruction of damaged cities. However, the unity of this Galerian imperial college was quite artificial and its duration very limited. Within three years of Carnuntum, dissatisfaction from the Caesars, differences in religion, the survival of Maxentius, and the deaths of Galerius and the other "great persecutors" undermined the tetrarchic system and divided the Roman world into several armed camps ready for civil wars.[25]

Political tensions arose quickly between the Caesars and the Augusti of the revised college. Constantine had twice been promoted to the Augustan rank—by his father and his troops in 306, and by the former Augustus Maximian in 307. He had gracefully accepted a demotion to a Caesarian position by Galerius in 306; but he was not amenable to a second demotion by the imperial council in 308. Therefore, he continued to style himself as Augustus in his domains and on his coins even though the other members of the tetrarchy referred to him as a Caesar. Maximin Daia, who had been in the Second Tetrarchy since its inception in 305, was unhappy that he had been passed over for a promotion while the new man Licinius became an Augustus and Constantine also claimed that rank. He expressed his dissatisfaction to Galerius and demanded a promotion. Galerius temporized and offered to call both Constantine and Maximin *Filii Augustorum* (Sons of the Augusti) in 309—they were so designated on the coins of some eastern mints for a few months over the next winter. However, when Maximin arranged for his eastern soldiers to acclaim him Augustus in the spring of 310, Galerius gave in and recognized all three of his legitimate colleagues as *Augusti*. While there were still "four rulers" as the term tetrarchy implied, the emergence of four essentially equal emperors in four regions of the empire was destructive of the Diocletianic system of two senior and two junior rulers promoted on the basis of merit and loyalty, and working in harmony with an agreed plan of succession. Although Galerius was still recognized as the senior ruler and listed first in imperial documents, each emperor was becoming independent in his own domain.[26]

Differences in religious policy likewise undermined the unity of this later college of emperors. Galerius, followed by Licinius and Maximin, strengthened the campaign to revive Olympian paganism with official government support for a more organized hierarchy of pagan priests and a more regular cycle of cultic rites; and systematized the

persecution of Christianity with the imprisonment, torture, and martyrdom of Christians who refused to participate in the worship of the state deities in the eastern areas of the Roman Empire. Hierocles and other pagan officials who had supported the political rise and religious policies of Galerius when he had served as a Caesar in the First Tetrarchy were given high government positions in the eastern provinces when he ruled as the senior Augustus in the Second Tetrarchy. They helped circulate the spurious *Acts of Pilate* which portrayed Jesus as an ignoble charlatan, and the tracts of Iamblichus which buttressed pagan rituals with Neoplatonic philosophy. Lactantius described how Hierocles and other governors in Bithynia repeatedly tortured his Christian friend Donatus the Confessor over eight years in efforts to force him to sacrifice (303–11). And Eusebius reported on the sufferings and deaths of hundreds of Christians in Egypt and Palestine, including the jailing and martyrdom of his own mentor, the famous priest and scholar Pamphilus of Caesarea (308–11). Although Constantine built pagan temples and worshiped in the official cults like his colleagues, he refused to harm the followers of the Christian God in the western regions of the Roman world. He permitted the recovery of the communal property of the Church, and he allowed the public worship of the faithful in his provinces. The rebel ruler Maxentius at first followed Constantine in offering toleration to the Christians of his domains; but he switched policy several times and ultimately gained the reputation of a tyrant.[27]

The survival of Maxentius in Italy only exacerbated the political and religious divisions of the Galerian tetrarchy, and gradually pushed its members toward military conflict. After the expulsion of Maximian, the brash usurper suffered some reverses; but then experienced a recovery which allowed him to hold onto power in Rome for four years. The African vicar Alexander, who had been put in office by Maximian, revolted against Maxentius in the summer of 308 and swiftly got control of some north African provinces and the sea routes between there and Italy. He was able to hold up grain shipments to Rome. Taking advantage of the concentration of Maxentius on this crisis, Licinius made a move over the eastern Alps, and conquered Istria on the Adriatic in 309. Maxentius, however, had some effective commanders in Rome. One of these was Rufius Volusianus, his Praetorian Prefect, whom he sent to North Africa with an expeditionary force in 309. Volusianus caught Alexander off guard, quickly defeated the troops of the African rebel, and murdered their leader. In the aftermath, the Maxentian army was allowed to pillage many of the great cities of North Africa, including Carthage and Cirta. Several Roman regiments were then pulled out of Africa, and stationed in north Italian cities from Susa and Turin in the west to Verona and Aquileia in the east to hold the Alpine passes against possible attacks from Constantine or Licinius. These troops regained Istria in 310. By then, Licinius had been called eastward to fight Sarmatians and to guard the Danube territories of Galerius, who had been taken ill. The preoccupation of Constantine with events in western, and of Licinius with events in eastern, Europe, allowed Maxentius to maintain power in Italy and Africa for a little longer; but his popularity was declining drastically in these areas. He had come to power on a program to restore the central position of Italy and the special status of Romans within the empire. Instead, his unrecognized usurpation had taken Rome out of the empire, and forced his subjects to subsist on their own resources rather than receive the largess of the provinces. He had to tax his subjects as heavily as Galerius had planned in order to fund a building program and to pay a loyal army. And he employed this army to brutally repress Roman

citizens for rioting over grain shortages and to punish African provincials for revolting against his rule.[28]

It was the deaths of the remaining three members of the original imperial college in 310–11 which caused the final demise of a pagan tetrarchy of western Herculian and eastern Jovian emperors, and cleared the way for the emergence of a Christian dynasty led by Constantine. The Christian authors of antiquity, of course, saw the "hand of God" in these dramatic events. The first to perish was the old western Augustus Maximian. He had reluctantly agreed to a second abdication at Carnuntum, and returned to the only court which would accept him—that of Constantine and Fausta at Trier in early 309. He was treated as an honored guest, and served as a senior advisor to Constantine. But the tough old soldier had never taken to retirement, and longed for real power and action again. When the campaigning season of 310 arrived, he persuaded his trusting son-in-law to lead only a small part of the western army against the Franks in the north and to leave a large portion of the soldiers under his own command in the south. Once Constantine was far away, Maximian put out the story that he had been killed; he then resumed the purple for a third time, seized the treasury at *Arelate* (Arles), and offered large donatives to the troops at hand. Constantine soon heard of the revolt, and reacted swiftly to repress it. Employing the same dazzling speed he had displayed in his bid for power five years earlier, he moved his army with "astonishing celerity" from the German front to the Saône River, sailed down it and the Rhône into southern Gaul, and caught up with the fleeing rebel at *Massilia* (Marseilles). Most of the troops in Gaul remained loyal to Constantine, and the people of the besieged city opened the rear gates of their defensive wall and let in his soldiers. They captured and defrocked Maximian. His life appears to have been spared initially; but after possibly plotting further against his son-in-law, he was forced to commit suicide by hanging himself in July of 310.[29]

The tensions in the imperial college and the rebellion of Maximian Herculius forced Constantine to seek a stronger political foundation and a higher divine sanction for his imperial position than tetrarchic membership and Olympian ideology had heretofore provided. Galerius had never wanted Constantine in the Second Tetrarchy and disagreed with him on religious policy; Maximian had been a political patron of Constantine, but turned against him in Gaul. Although his power was secure and his popularity was strong in his area, Constantine took actions to buttress the legitimacy of his imperial position over the next year—a Latin panegyric and coin motifs reflect these actions.

After Constantine returned to Trier in August of 310, an orator from Autun offered a panegyric at court announcing the emperor's recent accomplishments, and expounding his new imperial ideology. The orator must have been well coached by confidants of the emperor for his oration made a clear break with the "tetrarchic" principles of earlier panegyrics. At the beginning, he acknowledged that there were other rulers, but dedicated the panegyric to "Constantine alone" as if he were the only emperor who truly mattered. Then he divulged the little known secret that Constantine had an "ancestral relationship" through his father to the deified Claudius Gothicus, the first of the great Illyrian emperors who had restored discipline to the army in an era of crisis, and who had destroyed hordes of barbarians on the Danube. He argued that it was not by an agreement of men or by an unexpected favor that Constantine had become an emperor; but that by ancestry and birth he was destined for the role. He praised Constantine for giving valorous service in the ranks like the other emperors had done; but asseverated that he had a higher claim to

imperial rule than they had—he was the legitimate heir of Constantius, who was of the lineage of Claudius, and thus he was the third member of his family to hold imperial power by right of dynastic succession. Through the course of the presentation, the orator recalled the victories and recounted the virtues of Constantius; he also emphasized that the former Augustus had designated his first son as his legitimate successor, and that his soldiers, the other emperors, and even the gods had accepted this choice. He remarked on the similarity of Constantius and Constantine in physical appearance and in governing style. He recorded the recent campaigns of Constantine against the Franci and Bructeri, his construction of a bridge over the Rhine; and his success in overcoming the "seditious intrigues" of old Maximian. Through all of this there was none of the Jovian-Herculian imperial theology common to the earlier panegyrics of the era. Instead, at the end of the oration the speaker announced that on the route between Massilia and Trier, the emperor had "turned aside toward the most beautiful temple in the whole world"—probably the temple of Apollo at Grand, and that he had experienced a revelation in this holy place. He proclaimed that Constantine saw Apollo, accompanied by Victory, offering him laurel wreaths indicating a life and reign of many years; and that in the likeness of Apollo he recognized himself as the saving figure to whom the divine songs of the bards had prophesied "rule of the whole world." He praised Constantine for his generous benefactions to this and other temples in Gaul, and for his building program in Trier; and expressed the hope that the temple of Apollo in his native Autun would also receive imperial beneficence.[30]

This oration announced the new ideology of Constantine. By positing imperial ancestry through Constantius back to Claudius Gothicus, Constantine was rejecting the tetrarchic system and returning to dynastic tradition for determining political legitimacy. Acceptance by Galerius or promotion by Maximian were thus rendered irrelevant—Constantine claimed a greater right to rule through dynastic succession.[31] By presenting himself as the chosen one of Apollo, Constantine was rejecting tetrarchic theology and resorting to Solar syncretism for defining divine patronage. Since Apollo was customarily syncretized with *Sol Invictus*—the "Unconquered Sun" and "Highest Divinity" revered by the earlier Illyrian emperors and popular across the empire—Constantine claimed a higher source of divine power for religious sanction.[32]

With the political and religious divisions of the Galerian tetrarchy, and the revolt and death of Maximian, Constantine no longer felt the need to follow tetrarchic political and religious ideology. While he had early associated himself with Hercules and Mars in his public art and panegyrics, he was probably a devotee of Sol-Apollo in his private beliefs. Like Claudius, Aurelian, and possibly his father, he came to see "the Unconquered Sun" as a "Highest Deity" around which the subjects of the Roman Empire might find religious unity. Thus, after 310 Hercules disappeared and Mars declined in use on the coins of Constantine. They were replaced by the universal Sun god, who appeared on reverse motifs holding the globe of power with the inscription SOLI INVICTO COMITI, "to the Unconquered Sun the [emperor's] Companion." By using dynastic succession and Solar syncretism to strengthen his position, Constantine was breaking the bonds of tetrarchic ideology and making a claim for universal monarchy.[33]

If Galerius mourned the loss of Maximian, there is no record of it. If he disliked the increasing independence of Constantine, he was too sick to do anything about it. By the middle of 310 he was suffering from a terrible disease which ravaged his once powerful

body over the next year. Christian writers, led by Lactantius, saw his painful demise as the revenge of God on "the author of the nefarious persecution." Lactantius detailed the ravages of the disease: "a malignant ulcer arose in the lower part of his genitalia and spread widely"; imperial physicians tried to remove it surgically, but ruptured a vein, causing the emperor to bleed profusely; he nearly died before they stemmed the flow of blood; "the wound would not respond to treatment," and invaded his seat and intestines; "worms swarmed from within" the infection, and his "body disintegrated with intolerable anguish." From his deathbed, Galerius issued a strange toleration edict in the name of himself and his colleagues. He claimed that the policy of persecution had been intended to compel Christians to return to worship of the ancestral deities; but that it had resulted in their cessation of reverence to any gods, including their own. Out of concern for this, and in accord with their accustomed clemency, the emperors were decreeing an end to the persecution; and requested that Christians return to the worship of their own Deity, and that they pray to him for the safety of the emperors and the state. This edict was published on 30 April 311, and resulted in the opening of prisons and in the freeing of Christians through the eastern provinces—including the friend of Lactantius, Donatus, to whom he dedicated his *De Mortibus Persecutorum*. This last act of reluctant repentance did Galerius no good as he perished in horrible agony a few days later. The Latin phrase *ulcus malum in inferiori parte genitalium* with which the disease was described, the details by which its progress was recorded, and the frequency with which the painful death of Galerius was mentioned by Christian and pagan authors over the next century may well mean that he died of penile squamous cell carcinoma—cancer of the penis. Galerius had been the most formidable and most brutal of all the original tetrarchs—the conqueror of Persians, the keeper of bears, and the persecutor of Christians. Yet, it appeared that he had been struck down in the very essence of his manhood by the power of the Christian God. Lactantius had been warning for years that the God of the Christians would vindicate his believers, and that he would not let the tormentors of the faithful go unpunished for too long. The predictions he was making in the *Divinae Institutiones* seemed to be coming true—or so Constantine soon came to believe.[34]

In the summer and autumn after the death of Galerius, the remaining emperors maneuvered to strengthen their bases of power and prepared to battle for dominance in the empire. While Licinius escorted the body of Galerius to Romulianum for burial, Maximin marched across Anatolia, took control of the rich Asian provinces, and stopped the unpopular census of his subjects in the east. Licinius reacted quickly to this threat, marched toward the Bosporus, gained control of the east European provinces, and offered tax relief to the troops under his command. The rulers faced each other warily across the strait where Europe meets Asia, but worked out a peace treaty on a ship in the Bosporus. In the meantime, Constantine toured Britain and Gaul, granted tax concessions to his subjects, and ordered urban rebuilding projects, such as a large city gate at Autun. Maxentius fortified the towns of northern Italy against invasion, bid for the support of Christians in the capital by letting them elect a new Bishop of Rome, and in a burst of filial piety declared war on Constantine to avenge the death of Maximian. In the winter of 311–12, Constantine offered his sister Constantia in marriage to Licinius for a dynastic alliance which would protect his eastern flank, and ensure safe passage for his mother and son from the east to Trier. The pact was made. Maximin thought that this arrangement was directed at him. He therefore sent ambassadors to Rome, and offered

political recognition to Maxentius for a military alliance against their European colleagues. Each emperor prepared for war.

Learning of the terrible deaths of his old colleagues and of the military preparations of his young successors, Diocletian lost the will to live. He began starving himself at Spalatum, and after many restless nights with alternating bouts of lucidity and insanity, he died thinking his statues had been overthrown and his system undermined. However, the Gallic emperor he had once trained and then betrayed would march to victory in the civil wars of the next year; and he would restore political stability to the Roman Empire by his revival of dynastic succession, and offer cultural unity to Roman society by his conversion to the Christian religion.[35]

V
THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN AND CONSTANTINE'S CONVERSION

> The emperor saw with his own eyes in the heavens a trophy of the cross arising from the light of the sun, carrying the message, Conquer By This.
>
> Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I. 28

By the beginning of the year 312, the surviving members of the Galerian tetrarchy and the Herculian usurper of the imperial capital had separated into two political alliances and were making preparations for civil wars. Over the next eighteen months, Constantine and Maxentius would battle for control of the western half, and Licinius and Maximin would fight for control of the eastern half of the Roman Empire. Although political ambitions inspired these conflicts, religious positions inflamed them as well. Constantine was the senior partner in his alliance with Licinius, and he had early broken from the tetrarchic policy of persecution and instead adopted a position of toleration in his domains. Maximin was the senior partner in his pact with Maxentius, and he had early followed the Galerian policy of persecution and lately intensified the program to revive paganism. Subjects of the empire might have expected that victories for Constantine and Licinius would result in an end to the Christian persecution and a return to religious toleration. They got more than that. On the march to Rome, Constantine experienced what he thought were revelations from the God of the Christians; he adopted this Deity as his divine patron and defeated his rival behind the sacred talismanic symbols of the Christian religion. His victory over Maxentius in the west and that of Licinius over Maximin in the east resulted in the ending of the "Great Persecution" of Christianity, and the beginning of a partnership between the Christian Church and the Roman state.[1]

Though the eastern emperors had come close to conflict as they divided up the domains of Galerius in the summer of 311, the western rulers actually went to war first in 312. Posing as the pious avenger of his father, Maxentius denied imperial recognition to Constantine, overthrew the statues of his rival in his domains, and declared war on the Gallic emperor in 311. Posing



Map 3 The Italian campaign of 312.

as the enlightened champion of the oppressed, Constantine accepted the challenge, carried out a *damnatio memoriae* of the treacherous Maximian, and prepared for an invasion of Italy in the spring of 312 (Map 3).[2]

Maxentius had little support among his subjects and lacked skill as a field commander, but he had far greater military resources than Constantine. High rates of taxation, brutal means of repression, and the exiling of two bishops had led to declining popularity for Maxentius among both his pagan and Christian subjects. He had let his father capture Severus and a prefect reconquer Africa while he had remained behind the formidable Aurelian Walls when facing Galerius. However, he remunerated his soldiers generously; and they were proud of their successful efforts to keep their emperor in power against the attempts of Severus, Galerius, Maximian, and Alexander to oust him. With the Praetorian and Imperial Horse Guards of Rome who had put him in power, the troops he had taken from Severus, and the forces he had withdrawn from Africa, he had a total of about 100,000 soldiers which he could use against invasions from the north. He stationed many

of these in fortified towns across northern Italy—in the west at Susa and Turin to guard against Constantine, and in the east at Verona and Aquileia to watch for Licinius. Meanwhile, he again waited behind the walls of the capital with a strong central reserve of his most loyal troops.[3]

Constantine had solid support among his subjects and possessed skill as a field commander, but he had far fewer military resources than Maxentius. Military victories on the frontiers, building programs in the cities, and mild rule over his domains had led to great popularity for Constantine among both the pagan and Christian populace of the west. He had made several inspection tours through his provinces, ordering useful rebuilding projects and fostering religious toleration. He had led his troops in person, beating back barbarians, and putting down usurpations. Like the earlier Illyrian soldier emperors, he had formed a strong central corps of mobile field forces, the *comitatenses,* which could move swiftly to endangered areas; while like the more recent tetrarchs, he had placed strong detachments of stationary troops, the *limitanei,* in fortified bases which could guard the frontiers. Although the total numbers of his forces may not have been much below those commanded by Maxentius, he could not risk taking the bulk of his army from the Rhine frontier for the Italian campaign. At best, he could lead 25,000 to 40,000 men over the Alps in a bid to overthrow his enemy and liberate Rome. Maxentius therefore had more military forces and was fighting on more familiar ground; but Constantine had a more diversified army and was leading soldiers with more confidence in their commander.[4]

Maxentius proclaimed the god Mars as his "companion," and invoked the divine spirit of *Roma* as the "protectress of her city" on the coin motifs minted in his regions—the latter was shown in a temple handing him the globe of world rule within the inscription CONSERV URB SUAE (Ill. 21). The Italian tyrant was accused of using *superstitiosa maleficia* by a contemporary pagan orator; and pagan and Christian sources alike reported him employing every religious ritual available to hex the progress of Constantine. He searched the heavens for omens, examined animal entrails for signs, read the Sibylline oracles for prophecies, and sought the *pax deorum* through temple rituals. Constantine also claimed Mars as a divine patron, but presented *Sol* as his special "companion" on the coin motifs circulated in his domains—the latter was depicted offering him the globe of universal power within the inscription SOLI INVICTO COMITI (Ill. 22). The Gallic ruler was reported as following *divina praecepta* by the same orator who criticized the religious practices of his enemy; and both pagan and Christian sources reported him seeking guidance from the "Divine Mind" or "Highest God" for his Italian campaign. Constantine seems initially to have identified Sol as this divinity. However, he cannot have forgotten that the sun god was once the patron of Galerius. The policy failures and wretched death of the latter must have



Ill. 21 Coin of Maxentius with the head and titles of the usurper on the obverse, and the goddess Roma handing him the globe of power in a temple on the reverse (307).

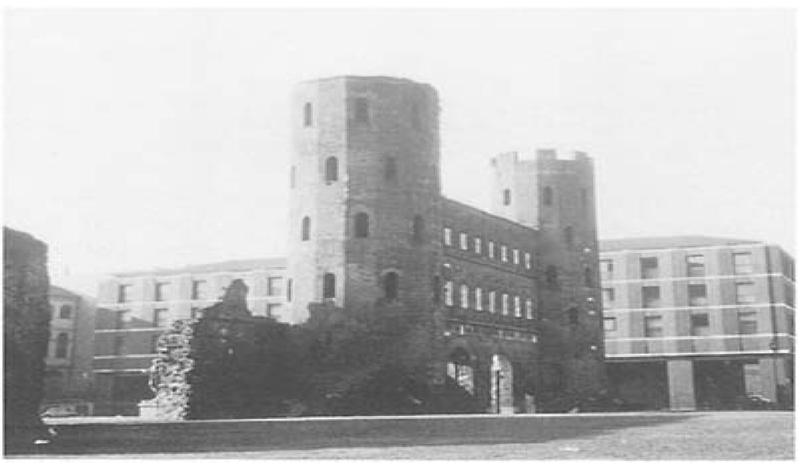


Ill. 22 Coin of Constantine with the bust and titles of the emperor on the obverse, and Sol holding the globe of universal power on the reverse—with a Christian cross as a mark of issue after the imperial conversion (316).

haunted the thoughts of Constantine as he marched into Italy. The military odds against him, the religious events of recent times, and the psychological stress of a difficult campaign opened his mind to another source of divine aid.[5]

Late in the spring of 312, Constantine marched his army down into east-central Gaul, and south of Vienna (Vienne) he turned east up into the Alps toward the realm of Maxentius. His forces crossed the Cottian Alps via the Mt Cénis pass, and found their

route into Italy blocked by the fortified town of *Segusium* (Susa). Rather than be delayed by a siege, the emperor ordered torches thrown at the gates and ladders placed against the walls. His men attacked swiftly and, with flames sweeping through the gates and soldiers leaping over the walls, the garrison and townspeople surrendered quickly. Constantine instructed his troops to suppress the fires and spare the citizens. His aim was to liberate, not to harm, the people of Italy. The major base for the defense of the northwestern region of the peninsula was *Augusta Taurinorum* (Turin), about thirty miles to the east of Susa where the Dora and Po Rivers converge in the great plain of Cisalpine Italy. The emperor led his men into the plain and found a large body of troops awaiting their approach to the west of Turin. At the center of the enemy army was a wedge of mailed cavalry—called *clibanarii* or *cataphracti* in the ancient sources. With the tactical brilliance of Caesar, Constantine spread out his battle line and let the enemy cavalry ride into the midst of his forces. As his army broadly encircled the enemy lines, Constantine unleashed his horsemen who charged repeatedly at the sides of the rigid *clibanarii* and beat them senseless with iron-tipped clubs. Many of the mailed cavalry were knocked off their mounts into a rising mound of mangled men and armor; others hung helplessly from their saddles as their horses galloped aimlessly across the battlefield. The foot soldiers of Constantine then marched into the fray, and began to cut down the enemy ranks. The surviving Maxentian soldiers fled in disarray toward Turin. The citizens were watching from the ramparts, and closed the great gates of the city against the retreating forces. The victorious Constantinian soldiers chased the remnant of the enemy back to Turin and slaughtered them along the walls as the citizens cheered from above. The huge *Porta Palatina,* the impressive northwestern gate of Roman Turin with its thirty-meter-high polygonal towers, still stands as a stark reminder of this Constantinian victory (Ill. 23).[6]

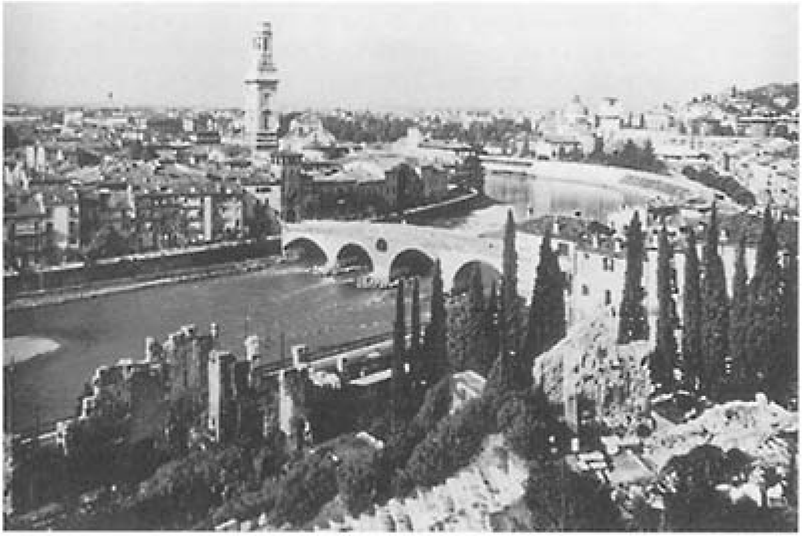


Ill. 23 The Porta Palatina of ancient Turin where Constantine defeated Maxentian troops in northwestern Italy.

The swift and clement capture of Susa and the decisive and brutal victory at Turin convinced *Mediolanum* (Milan) and many other towns in the north-central plain to send envoys to Constantine, and to offer supplies and support for his campaign. He was welcomed warmly at Milan, and his army was able to rest there in the middle of the summer of 312.[7]

Northeastern Italy was still held by Maxentian troops. The Italian usurper had stationed a strong garrison in the northeastern plain to guard against invasions through the eastern Alps, and another one at the top of the Adriatic Sea to block the coastal route from Illyricum. He had appointed his new Praetorian Prefect, Ruricius Pompeianus, to be the commander of this sector. Constantine had to overcome these forces before he could turn south and face Maxentius. Thus, he left Milan in late summer, and marched his army eastward. About fifty miles away, he encountered a cavalry contingent blocking the road near *Brixia* (Brescia). He ordered his own horsemen to charge the enemy, and quickly broke their ranks and put them to flight. They fled back to the major base for the defense of the northeastern region of the peninsula at *Verona,* about forty miles to the east along the Adige River. The topography of this ancient Roman city presented special difficulties which severely tested the strategic ability and tactical agility of Constantine. The Adige flows south out of the Alps until just to the southwest of Verona it makes a radical bend and flows back up toward the northeast; it then turns east for a short distance beneath some high hills; and then again makes a radical bend and flows back to the south before finally turning east and running off to the Adriatic. The river thus formed the pattern of a horseshoe running up the western, around the northern, and down the eastern sides of ancient Verona which was strategically located within it. Since a great defensive wall had been constructed across the open southern section of the city in the days of Gallienus, and the one bridge leading over the northern curve of the rapid and swirling river could easily be blocked, the city was a nearly impregnable fortress.

Clearly recognizing the problems confronting him, Constantine decided to surround and besiege the city. He sent a small detachment of soldiers north, and had them cross the river where it was fordable; he then had them come back south, and take control of the high ground above the northern end of the city inhibiting escapes over the bridge or through the river. Meanwhile the emperor moved the bulk of his army to the south of the city, and began setting up siege lines before the walls. The enemy came out and gave battle; but the Constantinian troops drove them back, and completed the siege works along the ramparts. Somehow Pompeianus had escaped before the ring was complete; and he rode eastward for reinforcements. He soon returned with a large force and threatened to surround Constantine’s lines. Like Caesar at Alesia, Constantine divided his army, having part continue the siege of the garrison in. the city, and having part attack the reinforcements in the field. He led the charge against the latter himself,



Ill. 24 Roman Verona set in a bend in the Adige River where Constantine besieged Maxentian troops in northeastern Italy.

cutting a bloody path through the middle of the enemy lines, and inspiring a heroic effort from the troops under his command. Pompeianus was killed in the mêlée, and his army decisively defeated. After witnessing the battle, the Verona garrison lost hope, and swiftly opened the city to Constantine (Ill. 24). After hearing of this victory, the forces at *Aquileia* sent envoys to offer their surrender; and the rest of the towns in northeastern Italy joyfully saluted their liberator.[8]

By the autumn of 312, Constantine controlled Cisalpine Italy from the western Alpine passes to the eastern Adriatic ports and from the northern peaks to the Po River—a 300-mile-wide and 100-mile-deep area of Roman Italy. Maxentius had unwisely left the regions between the Po and Rome largely undefended. The cities in Venetia, Etruria, and Umbria proclaimed for the cause of Constantine, and made it known that they would assist the passage of his army through their areas on the 300-mile march to the capital. A panegyrist compared the speed with which Constantine moved his forces southward with the rapidity of movement employed by Scipio and Caesar in their historic republican campaigns. However, this panegyrist, along with other ancient sources, recorded the sense of foreboding which Constantine felt as he crossed the Apennine mountains by the Flaminian Way and approached Rome. His arduous summer campaign in the north had been victorious, but Maxentius had held about half his army in reserve in Latium, leaving the military odds still around two to one against Constantine. Maxentius appeared to be using the same strategy which had defeated Severus and Galerius—remaining behind the Aurelian Walls and offering bribes to enemy troops. Constantine was so respected by his soldiers that he did not need to worry much about desertions from his troops. Yet, his

military forces were strongest in mobile horse cavalry and most suited for open field combat. If Maxentius stayed within the Aurelian Walls, investing the eighteen-kilometer circuit of Rome would be most difficult. Moreover, the information Constantine had about Maxentius, including intimate details from his wife Fausta, had made the Gallic emperor aware of the superstitious proclivities of his opponent, and of the religious enchantments he would be employing against him. If even the formidable Galerius, with all his reverence for the Olympian gods and with all the power of his eastern troops, had not been able to defeat Maxentius, Constantine could not have helped but worry about his own chances of success as he moved closer to Rome.[9]

In this situation, the mind of Constantine turned to religion and the eyes of the emperor looked to the heavens. With the military forces and religious rites arrayed against him, Constantine became convinced that he needed "some more powerful aid" than human troops and pagan deities offered. He recalled how his pagan predecessors had put their trust in the many gods of Olympian polytheism and had used all the powers of their offices to destroy the Christian religion; they had failed in their aims and suffered unhappy ends. He remembered how his father had honored the "God supreme above all" and had refused to enforce the worst persecution edicts against the Christian faithful; he had ruled successfully and died happily. So, he decided to call upon this "Highest Deity," and seek his aid and power in this time of trial.[10]

The emperor raised his eyes to the sky and implored the *Deus Summus* to reveal his identity and to proffer his help. Constantine later confided to Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea what followed, and he swore by an oath that his story was true. He said that just after midday "he saw with his own eyes in the heavens a trophy of the cross arising from the light of the sun, carrying the message, Conquer By This" (*Hoc Signo Victor Eris* in the original Latin of Constantine, but TOUTO NIKA in the Greek translation of Eusebius).[11] The emperor did not completely comprehend the meaning of this apparition; but that night he had a dream in which Christ appeared to him and admonished him to use the sacred sign of the Christian faith as a defensive talisman for his army.[12] As Constantine had been a protector of Christian believers in his domains, there were Christian clergymen traveling in his entourage and praying for the success of his campaign. He questioned them on the meaning of his revelations and on the sacred signs of their religion. They responded that the cross was the symbol of the victory over death won through the saving act of Christ. They probably informed him that Christian *fideles* were marked with the sign of the cross at baptism, and were told to invoke the name of Christ whenever they felt endangered by demonic forces. The emperor learned that the *crux et nomen Christi* were potent apotropaic signs which could be used against the forces of evil. Constantine probably remembered the famous incidents when the failure of an *haruspex* at Antioch to find any signs in a sacrificial animal had been blamed on the hexing of the sacrifice by a Christian palace worker marking his forehead with the symbol of the cross; and when the failure of the Oracle of Apollo at Didyma to utter prophecies was blamed on the existence of the *iusti*. The emperor must have reasoned that if Christian signs were more powerful than pagan rites, the Christian Divinity would be the *Deus Summus,* and the sacred symbols of Christ would overcome the superstitious magic of Maxentius. At this moment, Constantine converted to the Christian God. His conversion was not the final decision in a long internal search for moral regeneration and personal salvation; but it was not a momentary act of pure political expediency either.

Solar syncretism had made him a seeker of the "Highest God." Cultural toleration had opened him to Christian influences. Superstitious religion had made him a believer in talismanic symbols. His revelatory experiences convinced him that the God of the Christians had answered his sincere prayers, and that the *signa* of their cult would meet his dire needs.[13] The following morning he summoned his workmen, and directed them to fashion a new battle standard known as the *Labarum*—it was a gold spear crossed by a bar holding a banner with the imperial portrait, and topped with a monogram made out of the first two letters of the name of Christ in Greek, the letter Chi traversed by the letter Rho (☧). It therefore combined the two potent apotropaic symbols of Christianity. Constantine communicated his religious revelations to his soldiers, and ordered them to mark their shields with the *caeleste signum Dei,* the monogram of Christ, which would serve as a safeguard against the enemy. If this personal account of his conversion experience had not been preserved in the *Vita Constantini* by Eusebius, something similar to it would have to be assumed based on the references to prayers, dreams, divine inspiration, and sacred *signa* found in other written sources, and on the use of crosses and Christograms seen on Roman imperial coins.[14] Suffice it to say here that Constantine did not just tell this story to his biographer, but he also related it to his family and friends, and that it became common knowledge in late antiquity. When a usurper tried to overthrow his heirs a dozen years after his death, his daughter Constantina and his son Constantius II reacted by issuing bronze coins invoking the divine vision of their father and the divine institution of their dynasty—the coin depicted an angel crowning Constantine as he held a Labarum marked with the monogram of Christ within the inscription HOC SIGNO VICTOR ERIS, the celestial message of his vision. The Theodosian dynasty later issued bronze coins recalling Constantine's use of the Christogram on his shields—it depicted an angel marking a shield with the Christogram within the inscription SALUS REIPUBLICAE (Ills. 25 and 26).[15]



Ill. 25 Roman coin recalling the vision of Constantine—the emperor is depicted being crowned by a victory-angel and gazing at the Christ monogram on his war standard while the inscription records the message of his celestial revelation Hoc Signo Victor Eris (350–51).

Inspired by his celestial revelations and encouraged by their Christian talismans, the emperor and his army resumed the march toward Rome. They finished crossing the Apennine Mountains in mid-October, turned south and advanced on the capital city by way of the *Via Flaminia*. Constantine set up camp in a plain to the northwest of the Tiber River above the Mulvian Bridge (*Pons Mulvius* in classical Latin, *Ponte Milvio* in modern Italian).[16] Maxentius had the bridge cut in an attempt to impede the progress of Constantine. Maxentius remained behind the Aurelian Walls, and hoped to withstand a siege. He pretended not to fear the proximity of his rival, and began celebrating public games in honor of his accession to the throne six years earlier. However, neither the Roman people inside the walls nor the "Highest God" in the heavens above seemed willing to cooperate with his strategy. Hearing of the success of Constantine in the north, and tiring of



Ill. 26 Roman coin evoking the dream of Constantine—a victory-angel is depicted marking a shield with the Christogram as Constantine ordered his soldiers to do before engaging the enemy above Rome at the Battle of the Mulvian Bridge (383).

the tyrant in their midst, the Roman people jeered at their ruler in the circus, and chanted that "Constantine cannot be conquered." Fearful that his subjects might not remain loyal through a siege, Maxentius called some senators together and consulted the Sibylline Books for divine guidance. A passage was discovered which declared that "the enemy of the Roman people would perish on that day." Interpreting the oracle in his own favor, Maxentius decided to lead his forces out of the city, and face Constantine on the battlefield. Pagan and Christian authors alike agreed that divine forces seemed to have handed the usurper over to Constantine, with a Gallic panegyrist writing that "the Divine Mind…snatched wisdom away from the abominable man so that…he suddenly rushed out and…sealed the very day of his accession with his final destruction"; and a Christian historian affirming that "God himself drew the tyrant as if by secret cords a long way

outside the gates." The date of his destruction would be the sixth anniversary of his accession—28 October 312.[17]

Maxentius ordered a bridge of boats topped with wooden planks to be stretched across the Tiber near the broken arches of the Mulvian Bridge. The Roman usurper then led his forces over this makeshift span, and deployed them in several long lines facing the battle plain, but with their backs to the river. Constantine observed the movements of his enemy, and planned his strategy. The Gallic challenger led his troops out of camp, and spread them out to the length of the enemy lines. He gave the order for his cavalry to charge, and they broke the ranks of the Maxentian cavalry. Next, he sent his infantry against the foot soldiers of the enemy, and pushed them into the Tiber where many were slaughtered or drowned. For a while the Imperial Horse Guards and Praetorians held their positions around Maxentius, but when Constantine led a cavalry charge into their midst, they too broke ranks and retreated to the river. Maxentius fled with them and tried to ride his horse across the bridge of boats, but "pressed by the mass of the fleeing soldiers, he was thrown into the stream" and drowned. His body was found on the opposite bank of the Tiber, and his head was severed and stuck on a spear to be carried in triumphal procession the next day to show the people of Rome that the tyrant was dead and the city was free. Constantine could not help but think that he had made the right choice for a divine patron before the battle. It seemed that Maxentius had been expelled from the city by the will of the Christian God, and it appeared that his army had been vanquished by the power of Christian signs (Ill. 27).[18]

On the day after the Battle of the Mulvian Bridge, the victorious emperor and his troops entered Rome in triumph. As Maxentius had jailed senators, ravished matrons, harassed bishops, and brutalized his subjects, the Roman populace was glad to learn of his demise and heaped abuse on his severed head. As Constantine had defeated barbarians, expanded the economy, protected Christians, and nourished his subjects, he was hailed as a liberator and greeted with rejoicing by both the pagan and Christian people of the city. It

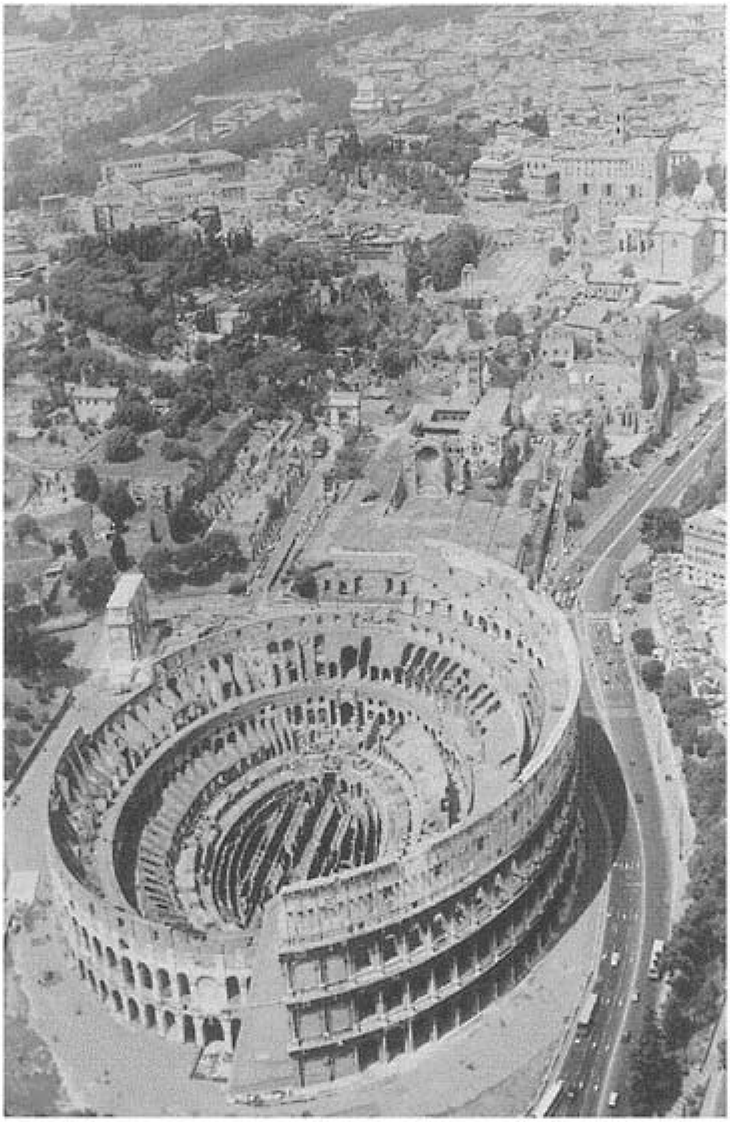


Ill. 27 The Mulvian Bridge over the Tiber River north of Rome where Constantine defeated Maxentius in October 312.

seemed that he was restoring light to the old capital. Constantine immediately treated his Roman subjects to imperial largess and honored the Senatorial Curia with an imperial visit. The only punitive measure he carried out was the disbanding of the Praetorian and Imperial Horse Guards who had supported Maxentius; but he permitted enemy soldiers who survived the war to be transferred to frontier duty up on the Rhine. In his meeting with the Senate, he promised to restore many of its ancestral privileges, and to employ many of its members in the imperial government. They responded by voting him numerous victory monuments, and by decreeing him the "title of the first name" which made him the senior Augustus among the remaining emperors. A special issue of gold and bronze coins was minted at Rome in late 312 in honor of his victory in the Italian campaign—the obverse carried a portrait bust of the emperor with the inscription IMP CONSTANTINUS P F AUG ("Emperor Constantine the Pious and Happy Augustus"), while the reverse displayed a legionary standard topped with an eagle between cavalry vexilla surrounded by the inscription S P Q R OPTIMO PRINCIPI ("The Senate and Roman People for the Best Princeps"). The *Optimus Princeps* title had been applied to Trajan and the "good emperors" of the second century, and the pagan nobles of Rome probably hoped that their new liberator would rule like them (Ills. 28 and 29).[19]

Constantine was certainly a great general like Trajan, an extravagant builder like Hadrian, a deeply religious person like Antoninus, and a serious thinker like Marcus Aurelius; but he was no longer a believer in the pagan gods as each of them had been. His revelatory experience on the road to Rome and his climactic victory behind Christian talismans at the Tiber had altered his beliefs. The new senior emperor would soon make his changed religious orientation evident through artistic representations, ecclesiastical associations, and imperial legislation in the autumn and winter of 312–13.

The triumphal *adventus* of Constantine into the capital had offered the first hint of the altered situation. As the procession wound its way through the streets of the city and into the Forum, some of the people in the crowds must have noticed that a new standard preceded the emperor, and that a novel sign appeared on the shields of his soldiers. A pagan panegyrist who described the entry parade a year later did not mention the traditional ascent to the Capitoline Hill and its pagan temples; rather, he reported that some of the spectators had complained that Constantine "approached the palace too quickly." Eusebius explained that as the emperor knew he had triumphed with the help of the Christian God, he reasoned that he should immediately render "thanksgiving to him as the Author of his victory." The evidence seems to indicate that Constantine declined to climb the Capitoline and offer sacrifices to Jupiter and the state deities for his victories; but instead entered the imperial palace on the Palatine and offered prayers of thanksgiving to his new patron God.[20] If some of the Roman populace had missed the procession or misunderstood its significance, the emperor quickly made a most public profession of his new religious position in the very center of the capital. While residing in Rome over the next few months, he ordered the completion and transformation of a grandiose new courthouse, usually called the *Basilica Nova,* which Maxentius had begun at the northeastern end of the Roman Forum. It was one of the largest structures in the



Ill. 28 Aerial view over the core of ancient Rome with the Arch of Constantine to the left of the Colosseum, and the Via Sacra and Forum Romanum in the center.



Ill. 29 Victory Coin of Constantine with imperial bust and titles on the obverse, and with legionary eagle and war standards on the reverse within the inscription S P Q R OPTIMO PRINCIPI (312–13).

heart of the city, and is still impressive in ruins with a longitudinal axis of over ninety meters in length and with barrel vaults of nearly thirty meters in height. In a new apse added to the western end of this building, Constantine had a colossal statue of himself holding his new Christian war standard set up as the focal point of the structure. At its base, he ordered that an inscription be posted proclaiming that it was "by virtue of this saving sign…that I have preserved and liberated your city from the yoke of tyranny." The extant portions of this statue with its eight-foot-high head have been placed in the atrium of the Palazzo dei Conservatori Museum on the Capitoline Hill above the Forum. One of the hands and both of the eyes of the statue seem to have pointed heavenward whence the emperor felt he had received the divine power to defeat the forces of his enemy. Stories of this bold witness to his new faith by Constantine were soon circulating across the empire, and were published within a year by Eusebius of Caesarea in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (Ills. 30 and 31).[21]

Eusebius later reported that the revelatory experiences of the emperor before the battle at Rome had induced him to consult Christian clergy and to read Christian scriptures in order to learn about the mysteries of his new faith. He also recorded that after his adventus in the capital, Constantine invited Christian ministers to be dinner guests at his table and traveling companions in his entourage, and to serve as his advisors on Church politics and Christian practices.[22]



Ill. 30 Remains of the Basilica Nova of Constantine at the northeastern end of the Roman Forum (*ca.* 312).

Two ecclesiastical leaders who entered the court circle of the imperial convert at this time were well-known figures in the western Church. Bishop Ossius of Cordova from Hispania appears to have been among the clergy who had traveled with Constantine on his Italian campaign, and who had explained to him the meaning of Christian signs. Ossius was a man of high morality and great learning, and was widely respected in both the Christian Church and Roman society. A new Latin translation of Plato's *Timaeus* was dedicated to him, and he seems to have been well versed in both classical philosophy and Christian theology. He probably mentioned to the emperor that the Platonic concept of a first and second Deity was somewhat similar to the Christian belief in God the Father and his Son the Word, and how this similarity might be used in converting pagans to Christianity. He may have directed Constantine's initial readings in the Bible, and suggested to him what duties the Christian Divinity expected a pious emperor to perform. As his name appeared in Constantinian letters and laws concerning Christianity, he most certainly advised the emperor about the hierarchical organization and ethical practices of the Church, and assisted him in giving patronage to and adjudicating disputes among Christians. The famous western bishop traveled in the imperial entourage and advised the Christian emperor for such a long time, in fact, that eastern Christian writers made a word play on his Latin name in Greek, referring to him by the similar sounding term



Ill. 31 Remains of the colossal statue of Constantine in the atrium of the Palazzo dei Conservatori Museum.

ὅσιος, "the holy one"—giving rise to the alternate spelling of "Hosius" for his name seen in works on the Constantinian Era. During his stay in the capital, Constantine also made the acquaintance of Bishop Miltiades of Rome (311–14), and learned how he was considered to be the successor of Peter, the "Prince of the Apostles," and thus the nominal head of the episcopal hierarchy of the Catholic Church. The emperor reasoned that such an important Christian leader should have a residence appropriate to his status, and ceded the Lateran Palace from imperial estates at the eastern edge of the city to the Roman See. Contemporary letters show that Constantine referred the adjudication of an hierarchical schism in the African church to Miltiades, and that the bishop hosted a synod for that purpose in his new residence. It was men such as Ossius and Miltiades who advised the imperial convert in discerning the tenets of Christianity and in advancing the status of the Church.[23]

After he gained control of the administrative personnel of the Italian and African dioceses—keeping some Maxentian men whom he could trust in office, and placing some new men who were sympathetic to his religious policies in office—Constantine issued several imperial letters and laws which restored the corporate property of the Church, and offered special privileges to the Catholic clergy in his domains. A number of these were preserved in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Eusebius and the *Codex Theodosianus* of imperial jurists. He had permitted the Christians of Britain, Gaul, and Spain to worship freely since early in his reign; and he seems to have allowed them to recover the property and rebuild the houses of worship they had lost in the "Great Persecution." Maxentius

had not been a fierce persecutor like his father; but he had exiled two Roman bishops and had not restored all Church property. Therefore, shortly after his arrival in Rome, Constantine sent out strict letters to the governors of his newly won territories ordering the restitution of Church property. His letter to Anullinus, the Proconsul of Africa, has survived, and stated:

> We ordain that when this decree arrives, if anything which belonged to the Catholic Church of the Christians in a town or other place is still retained by citizens or others, you are to have it restored to the said churches immediately.

These orders indicate that Constantine regarded the Catholic Church as a licit cult which had the right to own corporate property in the Roman Empire.[24] However, now that he was a believer in the Christian God as the "Highest Divinity," he wished to go further than mere legal recognition of Christianity—he wanted to upgrade the status of the Catholic clergy and to promote the worship of the Christian God. Thus, over the coming winter, he sent out letters to Church leaders and financial officials ordering that money grants be given "to ministers of the legitimate and most holy Catholic religion to defray their expenses." A copy of one of these imperial epistles addressed to Bishop Caecilian of Carthage is still extant, and instructed him to distribute the money to a list of clergy drawn up by Ossius; and that if he felt that more funds were needed, he should demand a supplement from the imperial treasurer. Apparently Constantine wanted to make Catholic clergy salaried priests of the Roman Empire, and wished to assist them in carrying out their functions.[25] This latter motive was made abundantly clear in a series of imperial letters and laws he sent out in early 313 to the provincial governors of the western provinces. Eusebius preserved a copy of one of the original letters addressed to Anullinus, the Proconsul of Africa, and it is worth quoting in full as it contains one of the first authentic personal statements of Constantine concerning the Christian religion:

> Greeting to you, our most esteemed Anullinus. Since it appears from many circumstances that when that religion is despised in which is preserved the chief reverence for the most holy celestial Power, great dangers are brought upon public affairs; but that when it is legally adopted and observed, it affords the most signal prosperity to the Roman name and remarkable felicity to all the affairs of men through divine beneficence, it has seemed good to me, most esteemed Anullinus, that those men who give their services with due sanctity and with constant observance of this law to the worship of the divine religion should receive recompense for their labors. Wherefore, it is my will that those within the province entrusted to you who are in the Catholic Church, over which Caecilian presides, who give their services to this holy religion, and who are commonly called clergymen, be entirely exempted from all public duties in order that they may not by any error or sacrilegious negligence be drawn away from the service due to the Deity, but may devote themselves without any hindrance to their own law. For it seems that when they

> exhibit the greatest reverence to the Deity, the greatest benefits accrue to the state. Farewell, our most esteemed and beloved Anullinus.[26]

Exemption from *munera civilia*—serving on city councils, collecting taxes for the state, putting on festivals for the people—saved the Christian clergy from expensive and time-consuming duties. By offering the clergy money subventions and service exemptions, Constantine was helping them devote their time and efforts to worship the Divinity upon whose beneficence he believed the welfare of his reign depended.

In order to make the worship of his new patron Deity more sumptuous and attractive, Constantine determined to provide the material resources for and to take the lead in building the first monumental public edifices for Christian services. Eusebius later recorded that the emperor "gave from his own private resources costly benefactions to the churches of God, both enlarging and heightening the sacred edifices, and embellishing the august sanctuaries of the Church with abundant offerings." The *Liber Pontificalis* and modern archaeology indicate that he started this process in Rome after his conversion. Next to the Lateran Palace he had ceded to the Roman bishops and over the demolished barracks of the Imperial Horse Guards who had fought for his rival, Constantine ordered the construction of a massive cathedral for the Christians of the capital in November 312. It was originally known as the *Basilica Constantiniana,* and would be built over the next six years in the form of a basilican longitudinal hall where the successor of Peter could meet with several thousand of his flock for corporate liturgical worship in magnificent style. This ancient Lateran Basilica would later be renamed *San Giovanni in Laterano,* and would be just the first of many churches with which Constantine and his family would embellish Rome.[27]

As the senior Augustus among the remaining emperors, Constantine had the right to set religious policy for the Roman world as a whole. Through the property restitutions, monetary subventions, clerical exemptions, and church constructions he ordered in the early months following his conversion, Constantine raised Christianity to a status of legal equality with paganism, and began to establish it as the favored religion in the western regions of the empire.[28] However, Licinius was merely tolerating Christians in the eastern European and Maximin was openly persecuting them in the western Asian provinces of the Roman world. Therefore, over the winter of 312–13, Constantine turned his attention to his pagan colleagues, and endeavored to gain their assent to his religious policy. He took actions to strengthen his political alliance with Licinius, and to stop the religious persecution of Maximin. While still in Rome, he dispatched letters to his colleagues announcing his recovery of the usurped territory and his promotion to senior Augustus. He requested Licinius to meet him in Milan to marry his sister and to discuss imperial business; and he ordered Maximin to cease the religious persecution of Christians and to accept the toleration policy of his colleagues. He remained in Rome into early January until he could have his sister Constantia brought to Italy for the imperial conference, and could have himself and Maximin designated consuls for the year.[29]

Constantine left Rome in mid-January and reached Milan by early February. Licinius came from Carnuntum and joined his colleague for their meeting at about the same time. A large gold medallion celebrating the FELIX ADVENTUS AUGG NN (The Happy Arrival of our Lords the Augusti) was minted in honor of the conference along with gold and bronze issues for the two emperors. Special coins were appropriate as the political

rule and the religious policy of the Roman Empire for the next decade would be determined at this meeting.[30]

The first order of business was the consummation of the political alliance of the emperors through the nuptials of Constantia and Licinius. Constantia was the eldest daughter among the three sons and three daughters produced from the union of Constantius and his second wife Theodora. Because they had been quite young when Constantius had passed away, Constantine seems to have supervised their upbringing at Trier. As they came of age, he sent his half-brothers to southern Gaul or Greece for higher education, and arranged suitable marriages for his half-sisters. Although the half-brothers would not be given important political positions until after Helena died, all of the siblings of Constantine seem to have respected their older half-brother and to have remained loyal to him during their lifetimes. Constantia may have only been about eighteen years of age when she arrived at Milan for her nuptials while her intended was probably thirty years older. However, politically inspired marriages such as this had been common among the Roman ruling classes for many centuries, and neither party seems to have had any misgivings about this match. Constantia was probably pleased that her brother had chosen an emperor as her bridegroom, and Licinius was probably delighted to accept a lovely young lady of imperial blood as his bride. Since his relationship to Maximin in the east was strained, a closer bond with the senior emperor in the west seemed advantageous. With a flair for ceremony, Constantine most probably staged a magnificent festival for the wedding of his sister and colleague. During the social events following the marriage, the new Christian convert must have excitedly recounted his recent revelations from the Christian God and military victories with Christian signs. He seems to have made some converts among extended family members and inclined Licinius toward the concept of a "Highest God" for divine protection and religious policy.[31]

After the wedding festivities, the two emperors turned their attention to imperial affairs. Constantine presumably encouraged his ally to increase the size of his mobile field forces, the *comitatenses,* as well as to maintain the strength of his frontier forces, the *limitanei,* since recent events had revealed the continuing necessity for vigilance against both internal usurpations and external invasions. He surely also proposed that Licinius issue the smaller bronze *folles* and the new gold *solidus* coin denominations in the east that he had introduced throughout the west in recent years.[32] Yet the greater part of their discussions appear to have focused upon imperial religious policy and the status of Christians. Licinius had been tolerating Christianity since the Edict of Galerius in 311; but Constantine wanted more—a policy of property restitution and legal protection for Christians. With scenes of the horrible disease and deathbed recantation of Galerius haunting his memory, and with stories of the heavenly revelations and battlefield victory of Constantine ringing in his ears, Licinius was open to the importunities of the new senior emperor. The recent hostility from Maximin in the east and the closer alliance with Constantine in the west convinced him to follow the lead of his brother-in-law and imperial colleague on religious policy for the empire. Under the predominant influence of Constantine, the two emperors drew up a formal accord, traditionally known as the "Edict of Milan." The greater part of it reads as follows:

When both I Constantine the Augustus and also I Licinius the Augustus came together happily at Milan, and we were taking into consideration all issues which pertained to public advantage and security, among all the other things we saw of benefit to the majority of our people, above all especially we believed that those things must be regulated in which reverence for the Divinity was concerned, so that we granted both to the Christians and to all people the uninhibited power of following the religion which each one wished, whereby whatever Divinity there is up in the heavenly seat *(quicquid est Divinitatis in sede caelesti)* may exist appeased and propitious to us and to all who have been placed under our power. As we thus believed that this policy was undertaken by salutary and most correct reasoning, we judged that the opportunity must be denied to no one at all to give his mind either to the practice of the Christians *(observationi Christianorum)* or to such religion which he himself perceived to be most suitable for himself, so that the Highest Divinity *(Summa Divinitas),* to whose cult we devote ourselves with free minds, may be able to extend to us in all things his accustomed favor and benevolence…. [After a clause ordering that all previous measures and conditions against the Christians be set aside, it continued:] And moreover we have resolved that this action is to be instituted toward the persons of the Christians: that, if at a prior time anyone seems to have bought either from our treasury or from anyone else those same places to which before they had been accustomed to convene,…let them restore the same places to the Christians without money or without any petition of price, with all frustration and ambiguity put aside; let even those who have received them by gift return those places also to the same Christians as soon as possible…. All such places must immediately be handed over to the corporation of the Christians *(corpori Christianorum)* through your intercession [imperial officials receiving this order] and without delay. And since the same Christians are known to have possessed not only those places to which they were accustomed to convene, but also other things pertaining to the jurisdiction of their society, that is of the churches *(ad ius corporis eorum, id est ecclesiarum),* not of individual persons, you will command that all these things, in accordance with the law which we have explained above, be returned to the same Christians, that is to their body and assemblies, preserving always the principle…that those who restore these things as we have enjoined without receiving a price for it may hope to secure indemnity from our benevolence. In all these matters, you will be bound to offer the above mentioned society of Christians your most effective support so that our instructions may be carried out as quickly as possible and that the interests of public tranquillity may be served by our clemency. Only in this way will it come about…that the divine favor *(divinus favor)* toward us…might continue for all time favorably for our successes and the public good. [It ends with a command for imperial officials to publish and post this document everywhere so that all imperial subjects can see and read the imperial will.]

The "Edict of Milan" formally established the Christian cult as a *religio licita* within the Roman Empire, the Christian *ecclesiae* as corporate entities with the jurisdiction to hold communal property under Roman law, and the Christian *fideles* as a protected religious group with the unhindered right to worship their God in Roman society. The dominant role of Constantine can be seen in the numerous clauses restoring and protecting the fortunes of Christianity; the subordinate role of Licinius can be discerned in the clauses allowing religious freedom for all people; and the concord of the two rulers can be perceived in the statements on the need for the worship of a "Highest Divinity" whose favor would protect them and the empire. Constantine had already enacted and even exceeded the provisions of the Milan accord in the west, and thus probably did not need to publish it in his domains—although he certainly kept a copy of it in his official archives. He expected Licinius to take it back to the east and put it into effect there where Christians had suffered the most from persecutions. Licinius would do this; and, in fact, the two extant copies we have of it are in the form of imperial letters issued to government officials at Nicomedia and Caesarea a few months later. When officially enacted in the summer of 313, it finally ended the "Great Persecution," and formally served as the official religious policy of the Roman world for the next decade.[33]

However, before Licinius could issue the new religious policy in the east, he had to deal with the hostile Maximin. Maximin had been an emperor since the spring of 305 when he became the eastern Caesar in the Second Tetrarchy. He judged himself to be the true heir of Diocletian and Galerius, and of their persecution against Christianity. He had vigorously harassed the Christians of the east while serving under his uncle; and upon the death of Galerius, he had begun to style himself as *Jovius* and to see himself as the senior Augustus. Though he had relaxed the persecution for a few months after the Edict of Galerius, he started it again with a vengeance in late 311 and prosecuted it with vigor for a full year. He arranged for officials in eastern cities to send "requests" for help against the Christians. The pagan ruler, of course, bowed to the "wishes" of his subjects. He appointed priests for the cities and high priests over the provinces who were to ensure the performance of pagan rites and the persecution of Christian believers, and to enforce the reading of the *Acts of Pilate* in the schools of his domains. He ordered Christian leaders, like Bishop Peter of Alexandria, arrested and killed; and he personally tried and condemned the famous Christian theologian Lucian of Antioch. This final phase of the "Great Persecution" was described in grisly detail by Lactantius who had returned to the east and witnessed it in Nicomedia, and by Eusebius who observed it in Caesarea.[34]

When Maximin learned of the victory of Constantine and the senatorial decree making him senior emperor, he was not pleased. When he heard of the imperial marriage ceremony and of the religious toleration policy at Milan, he was enraged. He decided to attack the lands of Licinius and fight for the supremacy of Olympian paganism over syncretistic monotheism. He gathered his troops and marched across Anatolia in late winter. He crossed the Bosporus Strait, and took Byzantium and Heraclea in Thrace. When Licinius heard of this attack, he gathered mobile forces along the Danube, and, with the blessing of Constantine, marched east to meet their enemy. Undoubtedly inspired by Constantine, Licinius had a dream on his journey in which an angel told him to seek aid from the "Highest God." Maximin, in contrast, took a vow that if his forces should win, he would utterly destroy the Christians. The hostile armies—70,000 with Maximin and 30,000 behind Licinius—met at the *Campus Ergenus* between Hadrianople

and Heraclea on 30 April 313. Before the battle, Licinius led his army in prayer to the *Summus Deus*. After failing to get Maximin to withdraw in peace, Licinius ordered his soldiers to charge. They broke the opposing lines and routed the foe. Maximin fled back across Thrace, the Bosporus Strait, and Asia Minor. After failing to hold the Cilician Gates against Licinian troops, he fled to Tarsus and committed suicide in July by taking poison and beating his head against a wall until his eyes popped out of their sockets. Over the summer of 313, Licinius ordered the deaths of the relatives and key officials of the "great persecutors," and dispatched letters to his provincial governors instructing them to enforce the religious toleration policy which Constantine and he had enacted at Milan. After ten years of violent repression, the Christian faithful of the east came out of hiding, and began to adorn imperial cities from Nicomedia to Alexandria with Christian churches. Lactantius, who had seen the start and end of the "Great Persecution" in Nicomedia, bid farewell to his friends in the east and began a journey to the court of Constantine in the west where he would spend his last years tutoring the imperial convert and his family in the tenets of Christianity. Along the way, he mused about the events of the past decade, writing:

> Behold, with all its adversaries destroyed, and with tranquillity across the world restored, the Church, though recently cast down, rises again; and the Temple of God, which had been laid low by the impious, the mercy of the Lord rebuilds in even greater glory. For God has raised up princes who have rescinded the nefarious and bloody decrees of tyrants and provided for the human race, so that now, as if with the cloud of that saddest time dispersed, a joyful and serene peace gladdens all minds.

Lactantius would place those words at the beginning of the little tract he would write at Trier in which he described the deaths of the persecutors and the victory of Constantine and how these events inaugurated a new era in the relations of the Roman Empire and the Christian Church.[35]

VI
RELIGIOUS CONCERNS AND APOSTOLIC ROME

Constantine the Augustus at the request of Sylvester the Bishop constructed the Basilica for the Blessed Peter the Apostle.

Liber Pontificalis 34. 16

Constantine remained in northern Italy into the spring of 313 until he was sure that Licinius had gained ascendancy over Maximin in Thrace. While his ally pushed the persecutor back into Asia, overcame their foe, and liberated Christians in the east, Constantine moved up into Gaul, defeated Franks on the Rhine, and returned to Trier in triumph in the west. Although he believed that power from the great Deity of the Christians had aided him in winning victory over his enemies and in gaining supremacy in the empire, Constantine as yet knew little about the beliefs and practices of Christianity. Over the next few years, his study of Christian doctrines and his involvement in Church disputes would strengthen his knowledge of his new religion, and stir within him a sense of mission. When he returned to Rome for the celebration of the *Decennalia* of his accession, he became convinced that he was the divinely appointed agent of the omnipotent Christian Divinity, and began a building program which would transform the city from a pagan capital into the Apostolic See.[1]

Constantine made only a short stop in Trier after his return to Gaul in late spring of 313. A large confederation of Franks was attempting to take advantage of his absence in Italy, and was massing along the Rhine River for an invasion into Roman territory. Constantine swiftly advanced to the frontier, frightened the barbarians and halted their attack. However, the emperor wanted to punish their temerity and discourage future invasions. So, in the summer he pretended to travel south to campaign in Upper Germany while leaving only limited forces in the north to protect Lower Germany. The Franks returned to the frontier and started crossing the river. Constantine had concealed troops along the Rhine, and they hindered the crossing. Then, the emperor unexpectedly appeared with a fleet, and attacked the deceived barbarians. He chased them back into their forests, devastated their lands, and killed or captured masses of their soldiers. The Rhine frontier would be safe for many years to come.[2]

With his internal enemies overcome and the barbarians on the run, Constantine was finally able to return to Trier for a festive celebration of his victories in August 313. An imperial *adventus* was always an important occasion, but this one especially so since Constantine had accomplished so much during his absence. The victory over Maxentius and his recovery of Italy and Africa for the legitimate imperial college, his promotion to senior emperor by the Senate and the strengthened alliance with Licinius, and the defeat

of the Franks and his personal presence in Gaul again all made his northern subjects feel proud of their emperor and more secure in his rule. Thus, in the days following the arrival of Constantine, a number of festive activities were held to celebrate his triumphs and to vent the joy of his subjects. Among these were a triumphal procession through the streets, chariot races in the circus, beast fights in the arena, and a panegyrical oration in the palace audience hall.[3]

A pagan rhetorician who had spoken before Constantine on previous occasions delivered the public oration. He had no trouble in lauding the personal *virtutes* and heroic *gesta* which the emperor had displayed during his victorious battles in Italy and on the Rhine. Court officers provided him with the historical details needed to recount the campaigns, and a classical education equipped him with the rhetorical techniques necessary to perform a panegyric. Through the course of the oration he vividly recounted the strategic brilliance and martial courage of Constantine in storming fortified strongholds, in conducting field battles, and in defeating barbarian hordes; and he favorably compared the recent accomplishments of his imperial subject with the fabled deeds of the great Alexander and the renowned Caesar. However, he faced a major problem in describing the source of divine *instinctus* and celestial *potestas* which had aided the emperor in overcoming his enemies. The altered religious position of Constantine and the increased Christian presence at court meant that traditional pagan formulations would no longer be acceptable in panegyrical orations for this ruler. The rhetor realized that associating Constantine with pagan deities would anger the emperor and displease the Christians in his entourage. Yet, he felt that mentioning Christ as the divine patron of the emperor would be a betrayal of his own religious beliefs and discomfort the pagans in the audience. He solved his problem by following imperial religious policy and by employing syncretistic religious terminology. Both Constantine and Licinius had invoked the "Highest Divinity" for aid in their victorious military campaigns over the past year, and had placed themselves and their subjects under the protection of this *Divinitas* in the "Edict of Milan." Thus, the Trier panegyrist adopted the same religiously neutral and studiously vague terminology when describing the "God" who had inspired Constantine on his campaigns and would aid him in his reign. Early in the oration, when comparing the greater military forces which Maxentius had been able to amass against him, the panegyrist rhetorically asked the emperor: "What God then *(Quisnam... Deus),* what Presiding Majesty *(Praesens... Maiestas)* so encouraged you, that [against the odds]…you yourself determined that the time had come for Rome to be liberated through your efforts." He answered his own question by stating: "Truly Constantine, you have some secret communion with the Divine Mind itself *(illa Mens Divina),* which having delegated our care to the lesser gods, deigns to reveal himself to you alone." Through the course of the address, the speaker informed the audience that their great emperor had been counseled by "divine will" *(divinum numen)* and "guided by divine inspiration" *(divino monitus instinctu)* in planning and winning his victories. In the peroration, where a prayer to the patron deities of the emperor was traditional, the orator addressed the Divinity directly, calling him "the Greatest Creator of the universe" *(Summe rerum Sator),* who has…"as many names as there are languages of mankind," and then characterized him as either: "A Certain Force and Divine Mind which is infused into the whole world and mixed with all the elements" *(Quaedam Vis Mensque Divina...quae toto infusa mundo),* or "Some Power above all the heavens who looks

down upon this work of his from the higher citadel of nature" *(Aliqua supra caelum Potestas…quae…ex altiore naturae arce despicias)*. The speaker affirmed that it was to this Divinity that he and the audience prayed, and offered a worthy petition: as he had "the highest goodness and power in himself" *(summa bonitas et potestas),* and both wished for and had the power to make just things happen, he should "preserve Constantine for all ages."[4]

The emperor probably smiled at the final petition and enjoyed the panegyrical oration. As a sincere believer in the Christian Deity, he would have appreciated the lack of references to the pagan gods. Yet, as the supreme ruler of a largely pagan populace, he would have tolerated the lack of references to Christ. Constantine was an astute politician, and realized that "a religiously neutral description of the divine foundations of [his] imperial position" was useful in the current religious climate. By defining the *Deus* of the emperor as the "Highest Creator of the universe," a "Divine Mind infused through the world," some "Power above all the heavens," and the "highest goodness and power," the Trier panegyrist united devotees of pagan poetry, philosophical pantheism, Solar syncretism, and Christian monotheism around Constantine and reflected his inclusive religious policy.[5]

A gradual change would occur in this religious policy, however, as Constantine learned more about his patron Deity. The arrival of his mother Helena, his son Crispus, and the Christian scholar Lactantius at Trier in the autumn of 313 helped accelerate the religious education of the emperor.

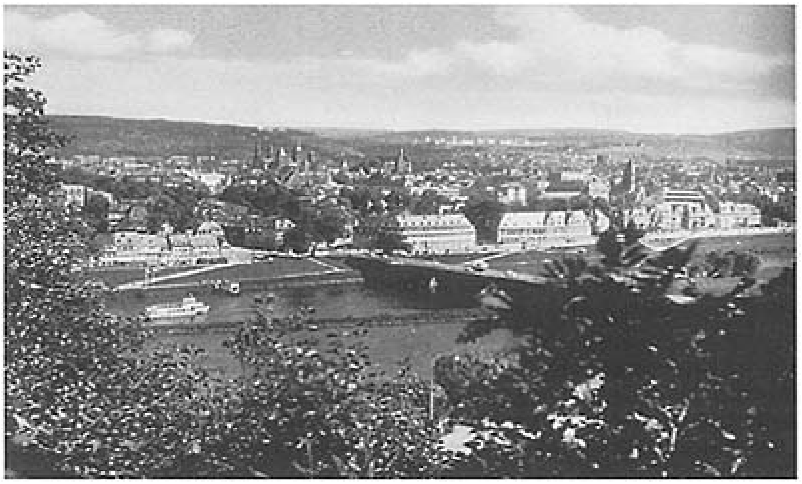
When Constantine had escaped from the court of Galerius in the east and hastened to the side of Constantius in the west in 305, he surely had been forced to leave behind his mother Helena and his son Crispus—probably at Nicomedia. His adverse relationship with Galerius and the civil wars of the emperors from 305 to 313 would have made it very difficult for him to arrange a passage for his mother and son through the Roman Empire during those years. Since there is neither literary nor material evidence which clearly attests their residence at Trier in the era of the Second Tetrarchy, it is probable that they had been detained as honored "hostages" in the east for several years. Yet, once Licinius had taken Nicomedia and defeated Maximin, the way was finally open for a family reunion between Constantine and his mother and son. Licinius probably arranged safe passage for them along the imperial road and transport system in the summer of 313.[6]

Constantine was surely pleased to be reunited with his beloved mother and young son again. He must have arranged a special reception to welcome them to his court, and provided sumptuous facilities for their residence in the palace. Even though Fausta could understand the joy of her husband, she may not have been quite so sanguine with the new arrivals. The fact that her older sister Theodora had displaced Helena as the wife of Constantine's father may have added an extra burden to the usual strains of a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship. Constantine seems to have sent Theodora and her children away from Trier about this time in order to shield his mother from reminders of her earlier humiliation, and to stress her special status in his heart. The fact that Helena was not only the grandmother, but also the surrogate mother of Constantine's son, may have elevated her position at court, and reminded Fausta of her failure so far to give her husband other children. Fausta appears to have been one of those women who have trouble conceiving, or carrying to term, a first child; but, after giving birth successfully,

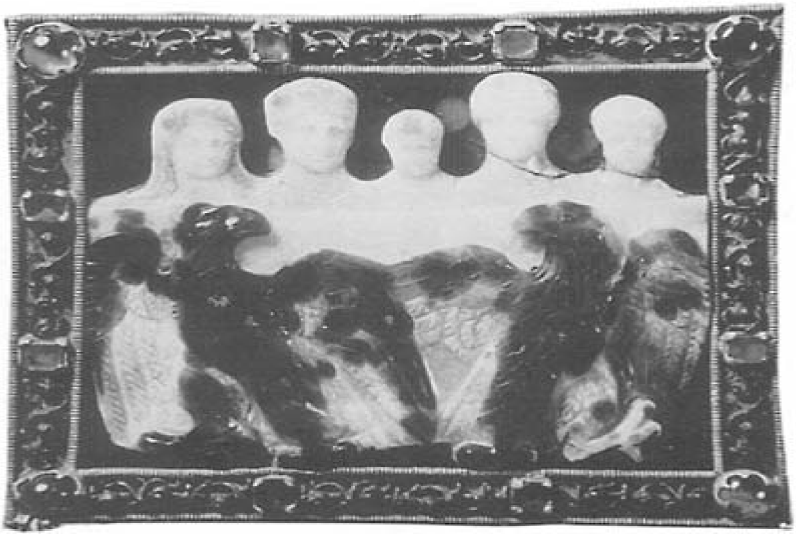
become very prolific and produce many children subsequently. Her embarrassment would finally come to an end after nine years of marriage when she gave birth to Constantinus II in the summer of 316. A beautiful sardonyx cameo, carved a few months later, depicted the imperial family at that time. It ultimately became the centerpiece on the cover of an eighth-century Carolingian manuscript of the Gospels produced at Aachen under Charlemagne, and is known as the Ada Cameo. It displayed two eagles with spread wings at the bottom, and depicted five imperial busts rising above a balustrade in the top part of the design. From the left to the right, the figures seem to represent Helena, Constantine the Great, the new baby Constantine II, Fausta, and the older son Crispus. It is interesting to note that the heads of Constantine and Fausta are of equal stature, and rise above those of Helena and her two grandsons. This was appropriate since Fausta was the daughter, sister, and wife of emperors, and—with her first son—the mother of an imperial heir as well. However, until she had given birth to her first child, she must have felt overshadowed by her mother-in-law, and her influence upon Constantine and Crispus. Nevertheless, Helena surely appreciated that Fausta had been loyal to her son against Maximian and Maxentius; and Fausta surely appreciated that Helena supported her desire to provide more dynastic heirs. Whatever tensions existed between them during this period, the imperial ladies appear to have tolerated each other out of love for Constantine and in the interests of the dynasty. Thus, while residing in the domestic quarters of the palace at Trier over the next few years, they both converted to the religion of the Christian emperor, and they both cooperated in the raising of his son Crispus (Ills. 32 and 33).[7]

As Constantine was now a believer in the Christian God, he wanted the finest scholar of the western Church to serve as a Latin tutor at his court, especially for his only son whom he wished to be educated properly. Thus, he seems to have invited Lactantius to return to the west at this time, and take up the position of *magister* at the court in Trier. St. Jerome, who studied in Trier a few decades later, seems to have preserved reliable traditions when he wrote in his *Chronicon* that "Lactantius, the most eloquent man of his own time, educated Crispus in Latin letters"; and also in his *De Viris Illustribus* that "in extreme old age, this man was the master of Caesar Crispus, the son of Constantine, in Gaul." The period which best fits the statements of Jerome was that between the years 313 and 316, when Crispus was residing at the court in Trier, was mature enough to appreciate the teaching of the great Latin scholar, and was in training to become a Caesar under his father; and also when Lactantius was living out the last decade of his long and productive life. It is even possible that Lactantius may have accompanied Helena and Crispus on their journey from the east to Trier, or, at the very least, have arrived there at about the same time.[8]

With the recovery of political, military, and cultural stability across the empire resulting from the alliance and victories of Constantine and Licinius, the senior Augustus was afforded the luxury of staying in residence at his court in Trier for many months at a time over the next two years—from mid-autumn through late spring during both 313–14,



Ill. 32 A view of Trier with the domestic quarters of the Constantinian Palace near the Cathedral to the left center.



Ill. 33 The Ada Cameo depicting from the left Helena, Constantine, Constantine II, Fausta, and Crispus, (*ca.* 316).

and 314–15. When not occupied with the heavy duties of a Roman emperor—selecting civilian officials and choosing military officers, designing public policies and proffering executive orders, issuing Roman laws and answering judicial appeals, etc.—he was able to renew his filial bond with his mother, to enjoy his conjugal rights with his wife, and to exhibit his paternal concern for his son. He charged Lactantius with training Crispus in the fundamental elements of classical erudition and in the essential tenets of Christian teaching. However, as his own education had been minimal, Constantine probably looked in on the lessons of his son, and found such occasions convenient for sharpening his own literary skills and for increasing his Christian knowledge in conversations with the old master, and through readings in his works.[9]

By the time Lactantius reached Trier, he had completed the *Divinae Institutiones,* and added an effusive dedication at the end of the text for the newly converted emperor.[10]

The dedication not only complimented the personal virtue of Constantine but also described the divine sanction for his imperial rule. In part, it reads:

> *Most holy Emperor…the Highest God has raised you up for the restoration of the house of justice, and for the protection of the human race;* for while you rule the Roman state, we worshipers of God are no more regarded as accursed and impious…. *The providence of the Supreme Divinity has lifted you to the imperial dignity* in order that you might be able with true piety to rescind the injurious decrees of others, to correct faults, to provide with a father's clemency for the safety of humanity—in short, to remove the wicked from the state, whom… God has delivered into your hands that it might be evident to all in what true majesty consists.
>
> Truly they who wished to take away the worship of the heavenly and matchless God, that they might defend impious superstitions, lie in ruin. But you who defend and love His name, excelling in virtue and prosperity, enjoy your immortal glories with the greatest joy…. The powerful right hand of God protects you from all dangers…. *And not undeservedly has the Lord and Ruler of the world chosen you in preference to all others to renew His holy religion….* For you, both by the innate sanctity of your character, and by the acknowledgment of the truth and of God in every action, do fully perform works of righteousness. *Therefore, it was fitting that in arranging the condition of the human race, the Divinity should make use of your authority and service.* We supplicate Him with daily prayers that He may especially guard you whom he has wished to be the guardian of the world….

These words fulfilled predictions which Lactantius had made earlier in the text, and confirmed events which Constantine had experienced in his career. The Christian apologist had warned the pagan emperors that their power came from God, and that if they abused this trust, divine vengeance would result. As Constantine had risen to power during the decade of the "Great Persecution," he had witnessed each of the persecuting emperors come to ruin. Only he and his eastern colleague Licinius, who were protecting Christians in their domains, still remained in power and ruled in prosperity.[11]

The *Institutiones* offered a lengthy curriculum for the Christian education of Constantine. At the start, Lactantius invoked the "one God…who both created all things and governs them with the same power by which he created them." He described the Christian Deity as the "eternal mind" of the cosmos, and characterized him as a heavenly "general" maintaining balance in the universe as a supreme commander keeps order on the battlefield—an analogy the Christian soldier emperor could appreciate.[12] The first three books offered a detailed critique of the false beliefs and cultic practices of pagan religion and philosophy, while the next three books provided a long exposition of the true theology and ethical standards of Christian religion and learning. At the end, Lactantius covered the second coming of Christ and the immortality of the soul. Constantine certainly studied this considerable tome over the years, and much of his later understanding of Christian doctrines, and many of his public writings on Christian topics can be traced to its pages.[13]

While in residence at Trier, Lactantius composed two other important tracts of much shorter length which seem to have caught the immediate attention of the imperial convert. Probably in the early months of 314, Lactantius completed a little book entitled *De Ira Dei (On the Wrath of God)*. In an early section of the work he stated that there were three steps to ultimate truth: (1) recognize the fallacy of pagan religions and reject their impious worship of man-made gods; (2) perceive with the mind that there is but one Supreme God, whose power and providence made the world in the beginning and govern it still; and (3) come to know God's Servant and messenger, who was sent as his ambassador to the earth, and by whose teaching humanity is freed from error and discerns righteousness.[14] Constantine had already reached the second step of this ascent to the truth and was diligently striving toward the third through his studies. Herein he learned that the Christian Deity loved good and hated evil; and through kind benevolence rewarded the pious who worshiped correctly and lived justly, but out of righteous anger punished the impious who rejected the true religion and just conduct.[15]

The other little work Lactantius was writing at this time was the famous tract entitled *De Mortibus Persecutorum (On the Deaths of the Persecutors)*. He probably completed it in 315 and offered it as an historical proof for the theses he had outlined in the *Institutiones* and the *De Ira Dei*. It chronicled the divine vengeance inflicted upon the imperial persecutors of the Church, and the divine favor extended to the imperial protectors of the Christians. The awful deaths of Galerius and Maximin were contrasted with the wonderful successes of Constantine and Licinius, and reinforced the theory that earthly power is a gift from the Christian God and that those who misuse it should expect divine wrath.[16] The emperor seems to have contributed historical data to the writer of this work, and was later to employ themes from it in his own writings.[17]

From his readings in the Bible, his conversations with Church leaders, and especially his studies with Lactantius, Constantine was swiftly gaining detailed knowledge about his new divine protector and his new religious society. He was learning that the Christian Deity was not just the "Highest Divinity," but "the one and only God"; and that the Catholic Church was not just another religious cult, but the ultimate "fountain of truth, abode of faith, and temple of God."[18] He was discerning that God had communicated his will to humans indirectly and partially through the writings of the Jewish prophets and the pagan philosophers, but directly and fully through the teachings of Jesus the Christ and his Apostolic followers.[19] From recent events and personal revelations, he knew that

the Almighty could intervene in human history, and sensed that he had himself received a special commission to be an earthly agent of the divine dispensation. He concluded that if he were to be worthy of the power which the Divinity had given him, he would have to protect the Christian people and promote the Catholic Church in the Roman Empire.[20]

This conclusion is amply illustrated by the words and actions of Constantine in dealing with the *Donatist Schism*. In the course of establishing legal privileges, distributing monetary grants and building new basilicas for the Christian Church over the winter and spring of 312–13, he had found that an hierarchical schism had broken out in the churches of North Africa as a result of the "Great Persecution." As imperial officials had applied the persecution edicts with varying levels of severity, so too had Christians reacted to them with differing kinds of fidelity. Rigorists had opposed any kind of cooperation with the persecuting authorities, carried food to the confessors in prison, and venerated the martyrs who gave their lives for the faith. Moderates had allowed the handing over of heretical writings in place of the real Scriptures, thought it best not to openly provoke imperial officials, and tried to lie low until the storm passed. *Traditores* had given up the Scriptures, sacrificed to the pagan gods, or offered the names of their brethren to imperial authorities. After the persecutions, factions had arisen in some churches over the election of new leaders and the question of repentent "traitors." Such was the situation at Carthage in 313, but power politics, personality clashes, and class conflicts had created a serious schism there.[21]

During the darkest days of the "Great Persecution" in 303–5, a moderate named Mensurius had been the Bishop of Carthage and metropolitan of Africa while a rigorist named Secundus had served as the Bishop of Tigisis and primate of Numidia. The former had gone into hiding with the Scriptures and had left some heretical treatises behind, which imperial officials confiscated and burned. The latter had resisted imperial authorities, refused to surrender any books, and been jailed. An acrimonius correspondence had ensued between the two bishops in which Mensurius defended his position and criticized some confessors as scoundrels who deliberately provoked officials in order to get imprisoned or martyred as a means of evading debts and gaining fame, while Secundus praised the confessors of his area and lauded open defiance of the authorities. Mensurius, however, was no coward; and when officials had sought one of his deacons who had written a bitter tract against a persecuting emperor, he had hidden him and refused to give him up. Mensurius had been sent to Rome to answer for his conduct. He seems to have acquitted himself well; but he had died on the return voyage. By then, Maxentius had seized power in Italy and Africa, and ended the persecution to gain Christian favor for his usurpation. Early in the year 307, the Christians at Carthage had thus been free to select a successor to Mensurius. The clergy and people of the city had decided it was best to act swiftly in this situation, scheduled an election, and invited only a few bishops from the nearby towns of proconsular Africa for the consecration—ignoring the Numidian bishops who recently had participated in this important event. The archdeacon of the church and a protégé of Mensurius, Caecilian, and two of the presbyters of the see, Botrus and Celestius, stood up as candidates in the episcopal election. The great majority of the Carthaginian clergy and people sided with Caecilian; and he was consecrated as the new Bishop of Carthage by Felix of Aptungi and two other neighboring prelates. Not everyone in North Africa was satisfied with this process and its result. Lucilla, a proud and wealthy widow of the congregation, had been in the habit of

carrying around the bone of a martyr, and fondling and kissing it during worship services. She had once been publicly rebuked by Caecilian for her disruptive behavior. She had never forgiven him for this "insult," and was willing to use her resources to stir up a schism against him. The defeated candidates Botrus and Celestius had been entrusted with the gold and silver ornaments of the church by Mensurius for safekeeping during his absence in Italy. On the news of his demise, they had secretly sold some items of the communal treasures to enrich themselves. Unbeknownst to them, Mensurius had left a complete inventory with an old woman of the congregation who had been instructed to give it to his successor should he not return home. When Caecilian had examined the inventory and discovered the peculation of the presbyters, he had demanded that they make restitution. Embarrassed by their deed and desirous of keeping the booty, they had chosen to withdraw from communion with Caecilian rather than to make restitution to the Church. A rigorist presbyter named Donatus and some of the poorer members of the church at Carthage held views more in keeping with the rigorist Numidians and their rural followers than with the moderate Caecilian and his urban congregants. They had not approved of the harsh treatment Caecilian had shown some of the confessors during the persecution, nor did they like the light penances he had imposed upon the traditores afterwards. Backed by the money and influence of Lucilla, the dissident presbyters and their lower-class followers appealed to the Numidian bishops to visit Carthage and overturn the election of Caecilian. Secundus of Tigisis and the other rigorist Numidian clergy had been upset that they had been left out of the process, and had been unhappy that a moderate and a protégé of Mensurius had been selected Bishop of Carthage. The Numidians also had the usual prejudices and antipathies that people from small towns and rural areas exhibit against the citizens of large cities and urban centers. Thus, they had been more than willing to accept an invitation from the dissident minority to intervene in the episcopal election. When Secundus and his clergy had arrived in Carthage later that year, they had been largely ignored by the Catholic majority, but treated generously by the dissident faction. Caecilian had offered to allow them to consecrate him again to his episcopal office; but that was not what they and their allies had wanted. Failing to find any disqualifying fault in Caecilian, they had declared that his chief consecrator, Felix of Aptungi, had been guilty of *traditio* in the recent persecution, and thereby had not been qualified to preside over an episcopal consecration. They had announced that the earlier ceremony had been invalid, and that Caecilian had not been properly installed as bishop. Secundus had presided over a new election in which Majorinus, a *lector* (reader) and a dependent of Lucilla, was selected and consecrated as the new Bishop of Carthage. As Optatus later wrote, "altar was raised against altar," and two men thereafter claimed to be the metropolitan bishop of North Africa. The Numidians had then returned home, leaving behind a divided church.[22]

Over the next few years while Constantine had risen to power upon the ruins of the Second Tetrarchy, the divisions in Carthage had developed into a schism across North Africa. The majority of the Christians of Carthage and in the other urban centers of the proconsular province had remained loyal to Caecilian. However, most of the Christians of Numidia and in the rural areas of the other provinces had sided with his opponent Majorinus. Dissident churches had emerged in many cities, and civil disturbances had occurred in many regions. Both factions had appealed to bishops outside of Africa for support, and Caecilian had received recognition from Ossius and the Hispanic churches

and from Miltiades and the Italic churches. When the emperor had initiated his new program of imperial patronage for the Christian cult during the winter of 312–13, he had been informed of the schism in the North African churches by his Christian advisors. He had reacted by commanding Patricius, the Vicar of the African Diocese, and Anullinus, the Proconsul of Africa, "to give careful attention" to this matter; and by restricting his monetary grants to Caecilian and "to ministers of the legitimate and most holy Catholic religion" named in a list by Ossius. Yet before Constantine had been able to leave Italy, he had become entangled in the dispute by an appeal from Africa.[23]

Shortly after Anullinus had announced the new imperial policy of monetary subventions and *munera* exemptions which Constantine had ordered him to extend to the Catholic clergy of Africa in early 313, members of the dissident faction of Majorinus approached the governor with a judicial appeal to the emperor. They gave Anullinus a sealed packet containing charges against Caecilian, and an open petition requesting Constantine to appoint judges from Gaul to hear their case. They claimed that they were the representatives of the true Catholic Church which deserved the imperial benefactions, and that bishops from Gaul who had not suffered the violent persecutions experienced in Africa should be able to judge their case fairly. Appealing to secular authorities was not the normal practice of Christians since the Scriptures urged the brethren to solve their disputes in the Church, and the emperors were usually hostile to their cult. But the arrival of a ruler willing to propagate the faith and subsidize the Church lessened the reticence of Christians to approach the throne. In mid-April, Anullinus composed a short missive explaining the situation in Africa, and sent it as a cover letter along with the two documents from the dissidents to Constantine who was still in Milan. The emperor responded swiftly in hopes of ending the schism in Africa quickly.[24]

As the *Pontifex Maximus* or "Chief Priest" of all cults in the empire, Constantine had a right to accept a judicial appeal in a religious matter; but as a *fidelis* or "believer" in the Christian God, he desired to handle the appeal in a manner which was in conformance with Church tradition. His response is preserved in an official letter which he wrote in June 313 to Miltiades, the Bishop of Rome, and Mark, an official of the Roman church:

> *Constantine Augustus to Miltiades, Bishop of the Romans, and to Marcus.* Since several dispatches have been sent to me by Anullinus, the most illustrious Proconsul of Africa, in which it is recorded that Caecilian, Bishop of the Carthaginians, is accused on many counts by some of his colleagues in Africa; and *since it seems to me to be a very serious matter that in those provinces, which the Divine Providence has freely entrusted to my Majesty,…the multitude is found following the baser course, and dividing, as it were, into factions, and the bishops are at variance;* it has seemed good to me that Caecilian himself, with ten of the bishops who appear to accuse him, and with ten others whom he may consider necessary for his case, should without delay sail to Rome, and that there in the presence of yourselves, and of Reticius, Maternus and Marinus, your colleagues, whom I have commanded to hasten to Rome for this matter, he may be heard as you understand in accordance with the most august law. In order that you may have the fullest knowledge about all these matters, I have attached to my letter copies of the documents sent to me

> by Anullinus, and have also sent them to your above-mentioned colleagues. When your Constancy has read them, you will consider in what way the aforesaid case may be most carefully examined and justly decided. For it does not escape your Diligence that *I have such great reverence for the legitimate Catholic Church that I wish you not to have schism or discord in any place. May the Divinity of the Great God preserve you for many years, Most Honored One.*[25]

The language employed in this letter reveals several things concerning the knowledge Constantine had gained about Christianity only a few months after his conversion. He had learned that the Bishop of Rome was the leading prelate in the ecclesiastical hierarchy; and therefore, he referred the African schism to Miltiades for adjudication, and addressed him with titles of great respect. However, as emperor, he retained the right to establish an appellate tribunal in a manner which he felt was fair; and so, he acquiesced to the request of the dissidents that Gallic bishops play a role on the arbitration panel. He had also begun to comprehend the Christian political theory that temporal power is bestowed upon earthly rulers by the "Great God" of Heaven; and thus, he believed that he had a duty to use the power he had been given by Divine Providence to protect the Catholic Church.[26]

While Constantine was enjoying his return to Trier and reunion with his family, Miltiades convened a synod at Rome in the Lateran Palace from 30 September to 2 October 313. Besides welcoming the imperial appointees—bishops Reticius of Autun, Maternus of Cologne, and Marinus of Arles—to the capital, Miltiades invited fifteen Italian bishops to sit with him and the Gallic clergy in the Lateran, converting the conclave from a judicial tribunal into a Church council. This was more in conformance with ecclesiastical tradition, and Constantine accepted the alteration and employed it as a precedent for dealing with future disputes in the Church. By the time the synod met, Majorinus had died; and the rigorist Donatus had succeeded him. He would lead the dissidents for four decades and give his name to their movement—Donatism. Caecilian and Donatus each brought ten supportors to plead their cases before the nineteen bishops at the Roman Synod. The intransigence of Donatus did not impress the members of the synod; while the willingness of Caecilian to relinquish the African practice of rebaptizing the lapsed and adopt the Roman practice of welcoming back the repentent by the laying on of hands pleased the episcopal judges. Thus, Miltiades ruled that Caecilian be recognized as the legitimate Bishop of Carthage, and that Donatus be condemned for arousing an ecclesiastical schism and for performing second baptisms. As a concession to the dissidents, however, Miltiades proposed that in cities where there were two bishops as a result of the schism, the first one consecrated should be confirmed in his see, and the second one should be given another flock.[27]

Although these decisions were decreed by the Bishop of Rome and backed by the unanimous support of several western prelates, Donatus and his followers were unwilling to accept them. Complaining that they had not received a fair hearing, they appealed over the heads of Miltiades and the bishops at Rome to the emperor. Constantine was not pleased with this development; but he responded in a manner which he thought would be beneficial to both the Christian Church and the Roman Empire—he summoned bishops and other clergy from the major sees of the west to come together in the city of Arles for a full council of the western Church in August 314. Arles was an ideal place for such an

important gathering. It was located at the mouth of the Rhône River, which connected the north-western provinces to the Mediterranean Sea; and on the Roman road system, which linked Italy to Gaul and Spain. It was situated midway between the original northern domains and the recently acquired southern provinces of Constantine. Its importance as an economic center was increased through

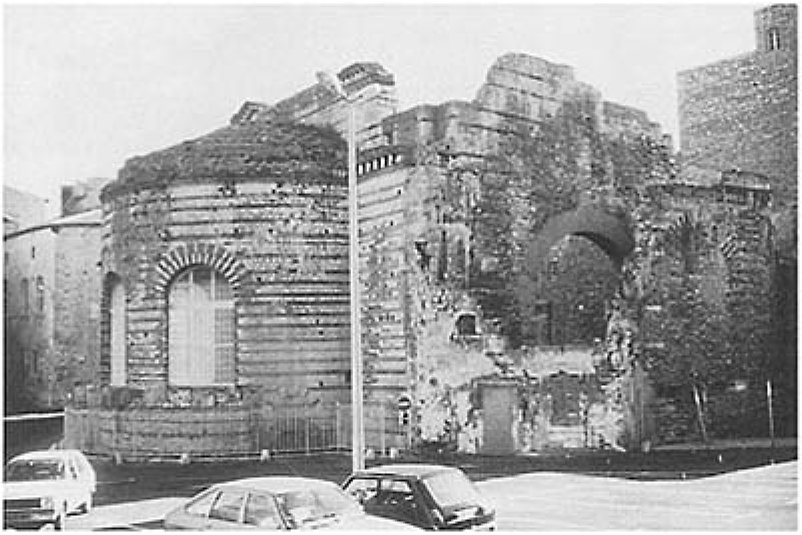


Ill. 34 Aerial view over Roman Arles in southern Gaul where Constantine convened a Church council in August 314.

the transference of the Ostia mint to Arles in 313; and its reputation for urban amenities was augmented by the building of a new *thermae* (bathhouse) complex along the river side of the city about the same time. Constantine must have seen the Council of Arles as an excellent opportunity to meet the leaders of the western Church, to assist them in solving the Donatist Schism, and to increase their support for his reign and policies (Ills. 34 and 35).[28]

The emperor oversaw preparations for the council during the spring of 314. He dispatched imperial letters from Trier to the Christian bishops of his domains whose attendance he requested at the meeting; and to the civilian vicars of his dioceses whose assistance he commanded for travel services. Two of these letters are extant—the "Epistle of Constantine the Augustus to Chrestus, Bishop of Syracuse," preserved in a Greek version by Eusebius; and the "Epistle of Constantine the Augustus to Aelafius, Vicar of Africa," recorded in the original Latin by Optatus.[29] In both, the emperor stated his dismay about the ecclesiastical schism in Africa, reviewed his attempt to end it through adjudication by the episcopal commission at Rome, and expressed his disappointment at the continuing contentions in the Church which would allow the

pagans an opportunity to disparage the Christian religion. He stressed his hope that a council of many might be able to accomplish what a synod of the few had failed to do—settle the dissension in the Church and restore harmony among the faithful. In the



Ill. 35 Ruins of the Constantinian thermae at Arles with the *caldarium* ("hot bath room") inside the apse at the left.

epistle to the bishop, Constantine told Chrestus to come to Arles by 1 August, to bring two of his presbyters and three servants with him, and to avail himself of the imperial transport system—naming the governor of Sicily from whom he could obtain official help. In the epistle to his vicar, he ordered Aelafius to assist the parties of Caecilian and Donatus, and the bishops and clergy from other African provinces, in employing the Roman transport system to travel across North Africa and through Spain so that they could reach the conference on time. The vicarial letter is particularly interesting since it has survived in the original Latin of the emperor, and contains a personal confession at the end which reads as follows:

> For since I am sure that you too are a worshiper of the Highest God, I confess to your Dignity that I think that it is not at all right that contentions and altercations of this kind be ignored by us, by which perhaps *the Highest Divinity may be moved to wrath* not only against the human race but even *against me myself, to whose care by his celestial will he has committed the management of all earthly affairs,* and having been angered, might determine things other than heretofore. *For then truly and most fully shall I be able to be secure and always to hope for the most*

> *prosperous and best things from the very prompt benevolence of the Most Powerful God, when I shall have perceived that all people are venerating the Most Holy God by means of the proper cult of the Catholic religion with harmonious brotherhood of worship. Amen.*

This personal confession shows that Constantine's study of biblical texts and Lactantian works was having an effect upon his political thinking—he had already come to believe the New Testament teaching that the Christian God institutes earthly powers, and the Lactantian theory that acceptance of power from the Divinity required duties in return and that failure to perform such duties could result in divine anger. The feeling that he was a recipient of divine benevolence from the Christian Deity and the fear that he could loose divine favor by failing to protect the Catholic Church would be essential elements of the religious thinking and imperial policies of Constantine for the rest of his reign.[30]

By 1 August 314, the preparations for the Council of Arles had been completed, and thirty-three bishops together with numerous lesser clergy from the Dioceses of Britanniae, Galliae, Viennensis, Hispaniae, Africa, and Italia descended upon the city along the Rhône. Marinus, the Bishop of Arles, served as the official host and nominal head of the council. Constantine—as Eusebius remarked—"like some general bishop constituted by God… did not disdain to be present and sit with them in their assembly, but even bore a share in their deliberations, working in every way for the peace of God."[31] Caecilian with his Catholic supporters and Donatus with his schismatic followers presented their cases to the gathering. Since the former appeared qualified for his episcopal office and impressed the bishops with his dignity, while the latter offered no documentary evidence against his opponent and offended the delegates with his obstinacy, the Council of Arles ratified the Roman decision and ruled again in favor of accepting Caecilian as the legitimate Bishop of Carthage. In accord with Church tradition and with the approval of the emperor, the clergy at Arles enacted twenty-two canons or "rules" concerning ecclesiastical order and discipline. Some were fairly traditional, such as 1, which declared that the Christian Pasch (Easter) should be celebrated on the same day throughout the world, and that the day for that festival should be designated by the Bishop of Rome; 2 and 21, which stated that clergy should serve in the places where they had been ordained rather than transfer to different sees; and 4 and 5, which ruled that charioteers and actors were to be debarred from communion as long as they were active in their professions. A few were relevant to the African schism, such as 14, 15, and 20, which regulated accusations against the clergy, and the consecration of bishops. Others were novel, and seem to have been enacted to strengthen the partnership which was emerging between the emperor and the bishops, and the Roman Empire and the Christian Church. Earlier Church canons and patristic writings had disapproved of, or even excommunicated, *fideles* who accepted magisterial positions or military service under the pagan emperors. However, since Constantine had exempted the clergy from public *munera,* and was removing idolatry from civic duties and camp rituals, it now seemed reasonable to allow the laity to serve the state.

Canons 7 and 8 allowed Christian laymen to serve as governors *(praesides)* of provinces, and in other government positions, provided that they carried ecclesiastical communion letters from their own bishops to the bishops of the regions wherein they were serving so that the latter might watch to see that they conducted their duties in

accord with Christian ethics *(disciplina)*. Canon 3 went so far as to threaten believers with excommunication "who threw down their arms in time of peace," and thus offered the first ecclesiastical sanction for Christian military service in the Roman imperial army. The latter did leave open the possibility for conscientious objection on the issue of homicide in time of war. Yet, as Constantine was promoting Christian practices and symbolism in the military, and was employing his troops to overthrow tyrants and persecutors, most of the Christians in the army would stay and fight *in bello* as well as serve *in pace* for their "God-beloved emperor." At the end of the council, the bishops drafted an epistle to Sylvester, the Bishop of Rome (314–35), who, following the death of Miltiades earlier in of the year, had ascended the papal throne. Sylvester had not been able to travel to Arles, but had been represented at the council by two presbyters and two deacons from Rome. The bishops indicated that it was the desire of the emperor that the decisions of the council be communicated to him, and that they be disseminated to the Church at large by him. The Apostolic tombs at the city of Rome, the long tradition of the primacy of Peter, and the imperial respect for order in the Church were combining to enhance the status of the Roman Bishop, who was addressed in this letter with the honorific title *Papa* ("Pope"), rather than merely as *frater* ("brother"). The bishops informed Sylvester that they had condemned the Donatists, whom they described as "troublesome men of undisciplined mind," who had insulted the authority of God, the tradition of the Church, and the rule of truth through the unreasonableness of their arguments and the immoderation of their actions. They expressed disappointment that he had not been able to sit with them and pass a more severe judgment against the schismatics. And they testified that with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the support of the emperor they had passed a number of canons to deal with the "present state of tranquillity" *(de quiete praesenti)*. They listed eight of these at the end of the letter, and appended all twenty-two in a separate document signed by the bishops and other clergy present at the Council of Arles.[32]

Constantine must have been initially pleased with the results of this gathering. He had gotten to converse with and gain the confidence of many important Catholic bishops in his domains. They had supported the decision of the Roman Synod to accept the election of Caecilian, and to reject the position of the Donatists. They had also enacted canons to unify Church practices, and to make it easier for Christian laity to serve the state. Unfortunately, the satisfaction of the emperor was soon disturbed by yet another appeal from the African dissidents. Constantine dismissed the council, ordered the Catholic bishops to return home, and drafted an epistle praising the upright judgment of the Catholics, and condemning the raging madness of the schismatics. The words in this letter reveal a great deal about the progression of the emperor in the Christian religion:

> *Constantine the Augustus to the Catholic bishops, greetings dearest brothers! The eternal, holy, and incomprehensible compassion of our God does not at all permit human nature to wander in the darkness for too long,* nor does it permit the odious wills of certain ones to become overweening. … I have indeed learned this from many examples, [and] I judge these same matters out of my own experience. *For there were in me formerly things which seemed to lack righteousness, and I did not think that the supernal power saw any of the things which I carried in the secret*

> *recesses of my heart.* Indeed, what fortune…ought these things to have brought? Surely one full of all evils. *Yet the Almighty God residing in the watchtower of heaven has bestowed what I do not deserve: truly now the things which out of his own celestial benevolence have been granted to me, his servant, can neither be named nor numbered.*
>
> *Most holy priests of Christ the Savior, dearest brothers!* I truly rejoice …that at last, after a most equitable examination has been held, you have recalled to a better hope and fortune those whom the malignity of the devil seemed to have turned away from *the clearest light of the Catholic law…*!
>
> Yet an upright judgment has done no good among them, and the *gracious Divinity* has not dwelt within their senses; for truly and deservedly the *clemency of Christ* has departed far away from these men… What a great madness persists in them, when with incredible arrogance they are persuaded about things of which it is neither right to be spoken nor to be heard, {and} revolting from a judgment rightly given,… I have found [afterwards] that they demand my judgment! *What a force of wickedness persists in the hearts of these men.... They demand my judgment, when I myself await Christ's judgment. For I say, and this is the truth, that the judgment of priests ought to be regarded just the same as if the Lord himself were presiding in judgment.* For it is not permitted to them to think otherwise or to judge otherwise than in *the way which they were taught by the instruction of Christ*…. While seeking after worldly things, they abandon the heavenly; O what a raging audacity of madness! Just as is accustomed to happen in the cases of the pagans, they introduce an appeal…
>
> *Dearest brothers*…nevertheless *may you, who follow the way of the Lord the Savior, exhibit patience* with the option still given to them, which they think must be chosen…. Depart and return to your own sees, *and be mindful of me, that our Savior may always be merciful to me*. As for those others, I have directed my men to conduct those abominable deceivers of religion straightway to my court, that they may spend some time there, and survey for themselves something worse than death…. *May the Almighty God keep you safe by my and your prayers through the ages, dearest brothers.*[33]

Constantine's study with Catholic scholars and society with Church leaders in the two years since his conversion had so increased his comprehension of Christian beliefs and practices that by the Council of Arles he could communicate with the bishops using terminology specific to Christianity. As a recently converted soldier emperor, he still thought of his divine patron as the great commander in the sky, but he expressed this belief in a phrase with near poetic cadence: *Deus Omnipotens in caeli specula residens* ("the Almighty God residing in the watchtower of heaven"), and he went on to identify his Divinity with the God of the Christian bishops, calling him *Deus noster* ("our God"), the *Divinitas propitia* ("the gracious Divinity"). He wrote of Christ as his *Dominus* ("the Lord"), and called him *Salvator noster* ("our Savior") as Christians had long been

accustomed to do. He exhibited his acquaintance with the *lex Catholica* ("Catholic law") and the *magisterium Christi* ("the instruction of Christ") which admonished believers to settle disputes through the *iudicium sacerdotum* ("the judgment of priests") rather than through appeals to secular courts. Throughout the letter, he called the bishops *his fratres carissimi* ("dearest brothers"), and named himself *the famulus Dei* ("the servant of God"), very clearly identifying himself with the cause of the faithful. Much of this terminology was common to the New Testament and to Christian society. The personal confession of Constantine that God does not allow humanity to wander for too long in the darkness, and that the supernal power can see into the secret recesses of the human heart, echoes Lactantian ideas and phrases. Though he still employed neutral religious language in dealing with general audiences, the emperor now was able to use specific Christian language in communicating with Church leaders. The terminology in his episcopal letter shows that by the Council of Arles Constantine was advancing swiftly in comprehending the doctrines of Christianity.[34]

As mentioned in his episcopal letter, Constantine had the Donatist leaders taken to his imperial court at Trier in an effort to distance them from their followers and convince them of their folly. His intentions were impeded somewhat in the autumn of 314 when a document arrived from Africa which seemed to prove that Felix of Aptungi had been a *traditor* after all. It was a letter seemingly written by the *duovir,* the city official, who had been charged with executing the first edict of persecution at Aptungi in 303; it described how he had fulfilled his duties, and contained a suspicious postscript which implicated Felix with the surrender of the Scriptures. This development gave the emperor pause, and he resolved to order a judicial investigation in Africa to make sure that the decisions against the Donatists had been just. The investigation was carried out over the following winter by Aelianus, the Proconsul at Carthage. He discovered clear evidence that the postscript had been added by a Donatist forger, and gave a formal judgment in mid-February 315 that Felix was innocent of *traditio,* "betraying the Scriptures." A transcript of the proconsular investigation and judgment reached Constantine in late April 315, and gave him hope that he finally might be able to solve the African schism. He ordered Probianus, the next Proconsul of Africa, to send the forger Ingentius to Rome where he was planning to go for the celebration of his Decennalia during the summer of 315. The emperor apparently planned to reveal the guilt of the forger to the faction leaders, proving that the Donatists did not have a legitimate case against the Catholics, and that Caecilian should be accepted as the Bishop of Carthage. However, when Caecilian failed to appear before Constantine in Rome, the emperor temporarily altered his tactics, and sent two bishops to Carthage in an attempt to mediate the schism on the scene and to appoint a compromise candidate. Since this just caused local riots, Constantine ordered that Caecilian and Donatus be brought to him for final judgment. The parties appeared at the imperial court in Milan during late October 315. The emperor reviewed the evidence, and upheld the decisions of the Synod of Rome and the Council of Arles, rendering judgment that Caecilian was the legitimate Bishop of Carthage and that the Donatists had not presented a valid case against him. Caecilian returned to North Africa with the support of the government; but many of the Donatist partisans refused to accept him and continued to cause riots in the cities. In a letter written in the winter of 315–16 to the Vicar Celsus, Constantine threatened to go to Africa to deal with the discord personally and to

"demonstrate most clearly to all…what kind of veneration must be given to the Highest Divinity." He ended this missive by asking

> What more ought to be done by me in accord with my purpose and my duty as a prince than that after errors have been dispersed and all rashness has been removed, I may cause all people to proffer true religion and harmonious simplicity and merited worship to the Almighty God?

Political problems in Italy, the birth of a son in Gaul, and his first war with Licinius prevented Constantine from carrying out his threat. Finally, in November 316, he wrote to Eumelius, the next Vicar of Africa, that Caecilian should be supported as the Bishop of Carthage, that only the Catholic clergy should receive his public benefactions, and that the communal property of the Donatists should be confiscated for the imperial fisc. The interventions of the emperor in the Donatist schism did not bring an end to the dissent in the African church; however, they did reveal that Constantine was becoming a committed Christian and was developing a sense of mission to serve the God whom he believed had given him supreme temporal power.[35]

The growing sense of missionary zeal which Constantine was developing for the Christian faith was displayed in more public and material ways during his *Decennalia* festival in the summer of 315. Since he had been acclaimed emperor nine years earlier, the beginning of the tenth year of his reign was scheduled to be noted with special celebrations in Rome on 25 July. Constantine traveled to Italy with many of his family members and court officials in order to visit the old capital for the festival. The imperial entourage appears to have reached Rome by 21 July and to have remained there until 27 September 315.[36]

After the formal *adventus* parade, the official greeting ceremony, and the settlement of the emperor and his retinue in the various imperial palaces around the city, magnificent public games and lavish ceremonial banquets were held during the course of the festival. A notable event in the midst of these activities was the dedication of the arch of triumph commemorating the victory of Constantine over Maxentius. The Senate had commissioned this monument as part of the honors it voted the victor in the aftermath of the campaign of 312. The *Arch of Constantine* had been constructed in the two and a half years since the last visit of the emperor to Rome. It was positioned in the very heart of the city—in the valley between the Palatine, Caelian, and Esquiline Hills where the great roads of the capital converge at the Colosseum and the start of the Via Sacra leading into the ancient Roman Forum. Standing about 80 feet in width and 65 feet in height, and composed of old columns and sculptures taken off monuments of the "good emperors" of the second century and new relief panels and inscriptions made for this structure, it was one of the greatest triumphal monuments of the Roman Empire, and presented the pagan senatorial view of the first Christian emperor. Statues and relief sculptures of captives from the Dacian campaigns of Trajan decorated the pedestals above and below the Corinthian columns framing the arches on both faces of the monument; relief sculptures of scenes from the Marcomannic wars of Marcus Aurelius embellished the top panels beside the central inscription of the structure; and relief sculptures depicting animal hunts and sacrifices from the reign of Hadrian were presented in four pairs of round medallions or *tondi* placed above the lower arches on both sides of the monument. The heads of

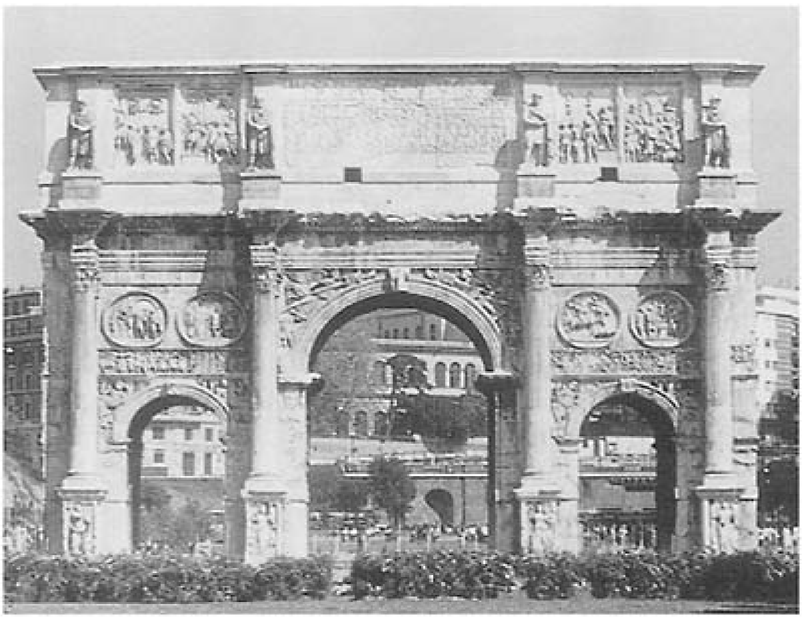
Hadrian in the latter motifs appear to have been recut to depict Constantine and Licinius hunting a lion, a bear, and boars, which symbolize the wild forces in nature and society which they had tamed. Beautiful Traianic reliefs of the emperor also decorated the inner sides of the central arch, and presented Constantine as the LIBERATOR URBIS ("Liberator of the City") and as the FUNDATOR QUIETIS ("Founder of Peace"). Just as they had done on the special S P Q R OPTIMO PRINCIPI coins minted for his victory in 312, the senators were deliberately comparing Constantine to Trajan and the "good emperors" of past times. Two new tondi and six relief panels were specially made to portray the victorious campaign and joyful *adventus* of 312. They started midway up the west end of the arch, ran around the south face above the two lower side arches, circled the middle of the east end, and finished on the north face above its lower side arches. The relief panel on the western end depicted the *profectio,* the "march" of Constantine and his forces out of the Alps and into Italy. Above this panel was a new tondo showing the Moon goddess *Luna* descending in her two-horse chariot as a symbol of the darkness covering Italy under the rule of Maxentius. On the south face were panels depicting the most important battles by which Constantine had defeated the forces of the tyrant and liberated Italy—the *obsidio,* the "siege" of Verona on the left, and the *proelium,* the "battle" of the Mulvian Bridge on the right. The relief panel on the eastern end depicted the *adventus,* the "arrival" of Constantine and his troops into Rome. Above this panel was another new tondo showing the Sun deity *Sol* rising in his four-horse chariot as a symbol of the radiance enlightening Rome through the coming of Constantine. On the north face were panels depicting important events during the stay of Constantine in Rome—the *oratio,* the "speech" of the emperor to the Senate and people in the Forum Romanum on the left, and the *liberalitas,* the "distribution of money" by the emperor to the citizens in the Forum Julii on the right. On the southern and northern faces of the monument above the central arch, an inscription stated:

> To the Emperor Caesar Flavius Constantine, the greatest, pious and happy Augustus, the Senate and People of Rome have dedicated this arch as a symbol of triumphs, because through the inspiration of the Divinity (INSTINCTU DIVINITATIS) and the greatness of his mind, with his own army he avenged the republic against both the tyrant and all his faction with just arms at one time.

The Arch of Constantine has often been interpreted as "a fitting monument of an age of transition." With the old motifs from the second century in a free and organic style, it reflected the principatial order of the classical past. With the new motifs of the fourth century in a static and regimented style, it depicted the dominatial order of the Byzantine future. By failing to portray either the offering of a pagan sacrifice to Capitoline Jupiter or the marking of Christian signs on Constantinian arms in the relief panels, the Roman Senate recognized the Christian conversion of the emperor without betraying its own pagan beliefs. By invoking the inspiration of "the Divinity" in the central dedication, the Senate followed the official policy of the emperors as recorded in the Milan agreement and reflected in the Trier panegyric of 313 which allowed their subjects to worship the *Summa Divinitas* in whichever way they felt most comfortable. The Senate knew that Constantine now identified the "Highest Divinity" with the Christian Deity; but it also

saw that he was still allowing Sol to appear as his “companion” on the imperial coinage. Constantine seems to have realized that Sol could serve as a bridge over which his subjects could follow him from pagan polytheism through Solar syncretism to Christian monotheism. The owners of the Julii chamber in the Vatican cemetery had foreshadowed this imperial policy when they commissioned an artist to place a radiate Christ in the chariot of the Sun god on a ceiling mosaic decorating their family tomb not long before this time. Whereas the Senate and the pagan populace might still see the “Highest God” as *Sol Invictus,* the emperor and the Christian faithful could recognize him as the *Sun of Righteousness*. Therefore, the Arch of Constantine with its invocation of “the Divinity” in the dedicatory inscription and the image of Sol in a rising quadriga above the adventus relief perfectly represented the religious environment of the years from 312 to 315 in which the edges of syncretistic paganism blended with the edges of Christian monotheism (Ills. 36–38).[37]

Constantine certainly must have been pleased with such a magnificent monument, and the manner in which it honored him. However, by the time



Ill. 36 South face of the Arch of Constantine in Rome, with the relief panels of the Verona Siege and the Mulvian Bridge Battle above the lower arches, and the inscription with the INSTINCTU DIVINITATIS phrase above the central arch (315).



Ill. 37 East end of the Arch of Constantine in Rome, with the tondo of Sol in his *quadriga* above the adventus relief.

his triumphal arch was dedicated, the emperor had already advanced beyond the kind of neutral religious syncretism which it represented in his personal religious beliefs. He thus began to proffer less ambiguous expressions of his private faith in the public arena. He had arranged for the minting of special silver medallions at the Ticinum mint in northern Italy, and he had these brought to Rome for distribution as donatives to important personages during the Decennalia. These beautiful commemorative coins were larger and heavier than the standard silver argenteus of the First Tetrarchy, averaging about 6.5 gm. in weight and coming close to the American 50-cent piece in width. The reverse motif honored the horse soldiers who had played decisive roles in the battles of the Italian campaign three years earlier. It showed the emperor on a rostrum addressing his cavalry, who were gathered around him with their mounts, and carried the inscription SALUS REIPUBLICAE ("the Safety of the State"). The more important obverse motif illustrated his religious convictions for the first time on the imperial coinage. Within the inscription IMP CONSTANTINUS P F AUG, the emperor was depicted in a rare frontal portrait wearing a high-crested war helmet, and holding his horse with one hand and a shield and scepter in the other. At the top front of the helmet was a badge marked with the Christogram symbol (☧)—the first two letters from the Greek word for Christ intersected to make a monogram. Protruding above the shield was a Christian cross topped with a globe. The monogram was the sacred sign of the *nomen Christi,* which



Ill. 38 The Solar Christ (Christ Helios) mosaic on the ceiling of the Julii Tomb beneath San Pietro in Vaticano.

Constantine had employed since his conversion to invoke the salutary power of the Christian Deity to aid his endeavors.[38] The globular cross scepter was a novel symbol devised by the emperor and his advisors to illustrate artistically the new political theory of Christian imperial theocracy which was emerging at court. The pagan emperors had frequently been shown on coins receiving a globe (often topped with a Victory figure) as a symbol of earthly power from a patron god—e.g., the common antoniniani of Diocletian and Maximian. Since Constantine no longer worshipped the pagan gods, they would soon disappear from his coinage; but a globe as symbolic of the earth which the true Deity had created could remain. A motif combining a terrestrial globe and Christian symbols perfectly portrayed the Christian political theory which the new convert and his ecclesiastical advisors were developing. By allowing himself to be depicted wearing a Christ monogram on his helmet, and



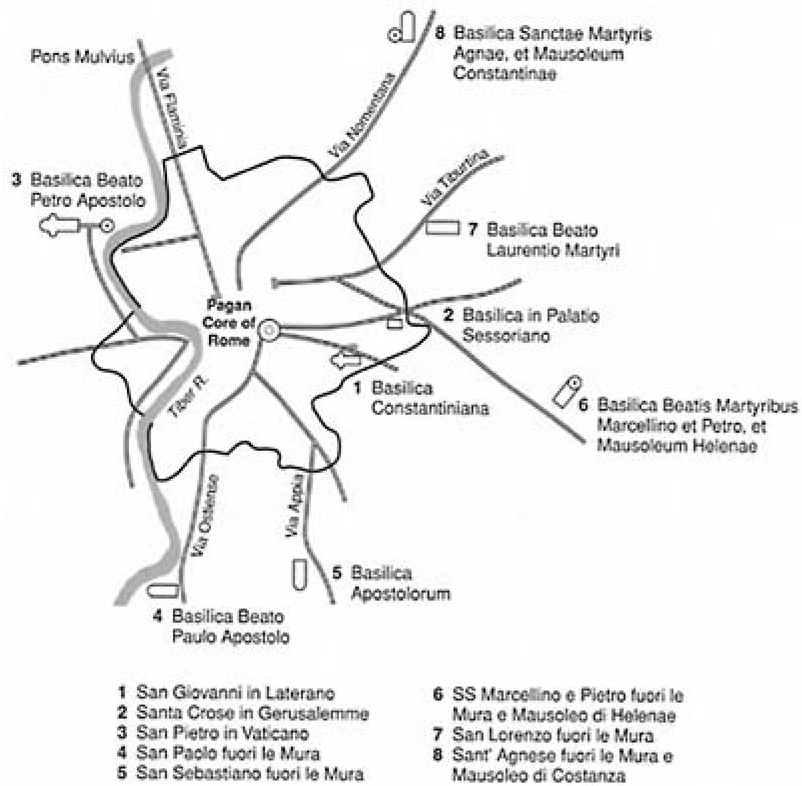
Ill. 39 The Ticinum silver medallion for the Decennalia of Constantine, depicting the emperor with a Christogram badge on his helmet and cross scepter in his hand on the obverse, and addressing his horse soldiers on the reverse (315).

holding a globular cross scepter in his hand, Constantine was showing in art what he was writing in words—that the Christian Divinity was the creator of the terrestrial world and the bestower of imperial power, and that the Christian emperor served as the divinely sanctioned imperial agent of the Almighty God on earth (Ill. 39).[39]

The devotion of Constantine to the God of Christianity became even more evident when he declined to participate in the sacrificial rituals at the pagan temples. In his short chapter on the Decennalia, Eusebius noted that the emperor instead "offered prayers of thanksgiving to God, the King of all, as sacrifices without flame or smoke."[40] Having become more aware of the exclusive teachings of Christian theology, he wished to avoid the traditional rites of pagan idolatry. This note in the *Vita Constantini,* several references in the *Liber Pontificalis,* and abundant evidence from artistic and archaeological sources, seem to prove that while Constantine was in Rome for his Decennalia he participated in Christian worship services, and commissioned the building of numerous Christian basilicas at important locations around the city.

In 312, the emperor had ceded the Lateran Palace to Bishop Miltiades, and commissioned the building of a large edifice for Christian worship beside it at the east end of Rome just inside the Aurelian Wall. Constantine appears to have had two major concerns in mind when he constructed that and other Roman churches: the first was not to alienate the pagans of the city, who had greeted him as joyously as had the Christians at his *adventus* and whose support he wished to retain; the second was to patronize the Christian Church as generously as possible by building magnificent edifices for public worship, and by giving Christianity an impressive public presence. These concerns determined *where* and *how* the emperor constructed churches in and around the old capital.

Constantine may have caused discomfort to some pagans—especially those of the senatorial class—when he had set up his colossal statue holding a standard marked with Christian signs in the Basilica Nova in 312. Such a blatant display of his new religious orientation may have aroused the religious conservatism of the pagan nobility who revered the ancestral traditions of the state and the historic temples of the gods which adorned the ceremonial heart of the city. Constructing Christian churches in that area would not have been politic. Therefore, when choosing sites for the episcopal cathedral and the other churches which he decided to build at Rome, he avoided the pagan core of the city, and employed imperial estates at the edges of the capital which were part of the private purse of the emperor, or Christian cemeteries beyond the walls which the Church owned as a legal corporation. In these locations, Constantine would not so directly confront the pagan majority, but could still fully meet the needs of the Christian community (Map 4).[41]



Map 4 The Christian basilicas of Constantinian Rome—their locations and ancient Latin names are shown on the map, and their modern Italian names given below the map.

Since Christianity had existed as an illicit cult and persecuted religion through much of its history, the Church had not been able to establish much of a tradition of public architecture in the cities of the empire. The faithful had long congregated in the private homes of fellow believers—the *domus ecclesiae* of the first and second centuries. Only after the "Peace of Gallienus" had some of the more wealthy Christian communities begun to erect bigger assembly halls—the *aulae ecclesiae* of the late third century. However, most of these had been destroyed in the tetrarchic persecutions. Constantine, his Christian advisors, and imperial architects were thus given the chance to create the normative forms of Christian church architecture. They realized that employing pagan temples as models would not be appropriate. These structures were not suited for the needs of a Christian community, and they were polluted with the stains of pagan idolatry. A secular structure was instead adopted as the model for public church architecture. The primary literary source for the Roman churches of Constantine refers to all of them by the Latin term *basilica*. This word designated a generic type of architecture which was used for assembly rooms, court houses, and imperial audience halls. It had a few variants in design, but often included a longitudinal hall with a high, flat, coffered ceiling, and a triangular shaped timber or tiled roof. The long central hall was called a nave, and it was usually terminated by a semi-circular apse at one end, and was often flanked with lower side aisles separated from the central hall by colonnades. The nave colonnades, either trabeated or arcaded, carried marble revetments which offered space for decoration and supported clerestory windows which provided sources of light. Well-preserved examples of these structures are the imperial audience hall basilicas of Diocletian at Split, and of Constantine at Trier. With less idolatrous contamination and more focused interior space than the pagan temples, the secular basilica could more easily be adapted to the needs of Christian congregations. A large body of believers could gather together in the central hall, and the longitudinal axis of the structure would focus them on the raised dias at the apsidal end. There a bishop or a priest, standing at an altar under the glorification arch where an imperial throne or judgment chair had been located in the secular model, could lead the assembly in communal services. Such edifices could also be employed as covered cemeteries focused upon the tombs of famous Christian martyrs. The faithful could be buried in the floors of the side aisles, and commemorative services could be held in the central hall. Whether built originally for liturgical or cemeterial use, the Christian basilicas of Constantine would be constructed swiftly, they would be of impressive size on the exterior, and they would be ornately decorated on the interior. They would suitably fulfill his goals of supporting the Catholic Church with massive material resources and propagating the Christian faith with impressive public edifices. Most of the great Constantinian basilicas of anti-quity have been rebuilt since the Renaissance; yet, ancient literary descriptions, early illustrations, and salvaged materials can be employed to resurrect the original structures.[42]

By the time Constantine returned to Rome in the summer of 315, the cathedral church he had commissioned beside the Lateran Palace was partially completed. He certainly would have wanted to inspect it, and surely would have wished to meet the new Bishop of Rome, Sylvester, who was beginning to offer liturgical worship within it. The *Liber Pontificalis* simply calls this first Constantinian Christian church the *Basilica Constantiniana;* but *ca.* 600 it was renamed for John the Baptist and John the Apostle,

and thus is known today as *San Giovanni in Laterano*. The ancient edifice survived with minor renovations into the Baroque Era when it was rebuilt. An aerial view toward the east front of the present church illustrates its location just inside the eastern edge of the Aurelian Wall. The eighteenth-century neo-classical facade of Galilei dominates the eastern entry, but a fourth-century statue of Constantine stands at the left end of the narthex commemorating the builder of the old basilica. Inside the antique bronze doors of the nave, the seventeenth-century reconstruction of the interior by Borromini still uses the longitudinal axis and coffered ceiling of the Constantinian model, but now has massive Baroque arcades along the central hall. In between these imposing arches are sculptural niches for the Apostles flanked with green-speckled marble columns saved from the side aisles of Constantine's church and used as decorative embellishments in Borromini's nave (Ills. 40 and 41). Modern archaeological investigations have revealed that portions of the side walls of the ancient church are still standing to a height of 8.5 meters above ground; and that the foundations of the original apse and nave aisles reached a depth of 7.5 meters underground. Digging under the western end of the modern structure indicates that the Constantinian basilica had wings probably used as sacristies extending out at the junction of the aisles and the apse—a modification of the secular basilica that would evolve into the transept element which gave Christian churches a symbolic cruciform floor plan. A drawing of the exterior of the old basilica by Marten van Heemskerck in 1535, and a fresco of the interior of the old church by Filippo Gagliardi in 1650 convey some idea of the Constantinian basilica in decline. The latter fresco shows the small speckled columns of the side aisles which were reused in the niches of Borromini's nave, and the great plain columns of the central hall which were employed as buttresses in the walls of the modern church. Yet, such material conveys little of the internal beauty and ornate decoration of the fourth-century basilica. One has to turn to the biography of Sylvester in the *Liber Pontificalis* for this. It tells of a vaulted altar canopy of hammered silver fronted by silver statues of Christ and the Apostles in the apse, of numerous gold chandeliers and silver lamps hanging in the central nave and side aisles of the church, and of magnificent service bowls and chalices available for the eucharist. Constructed over a six-year period from 312 to 318 through the generosity of the first Christian emperor, the Lateran Basilica of Constantine was a great longitudinal hall, with a high central nave terminating in an apse, with lower double side aisles, and with sacristies projecting out like transeptial arms at the end of the side aisles. About 100 meters in length, it was an impressive public edifice where Pope Sylvester could meet with several thousand of his flock for liturgical worship (Ills. 42 and 43).[43]

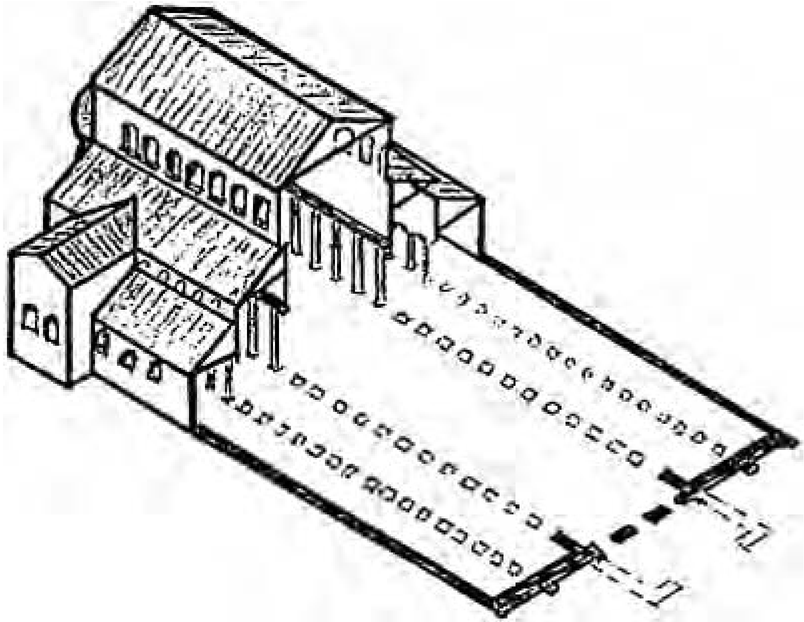
The imper ial women of Constantine's family were also participants in the emperor's church-building programs. The Lateran Palace which Constantine had ceded to the papacy had been a part of the dowry of his wife Fausta; and the Lateran Basilica next to it was built over the demolished barracks of the Imperial Horse Guards who had fought for Maxentius. Fausta no longer needed a separate palace since she lived with her husband.



Ill. 40 A view over the Aurelian Wall to the eastern facade of the Basilica Constantiniana, now San Giovanni in Laterano.

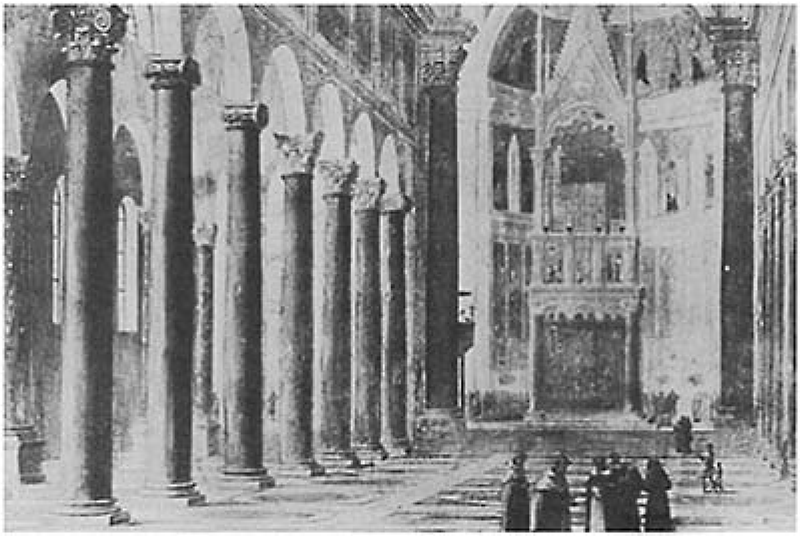


Ill. 41 Interior of the reconstructed nave of San Giovanni, but with ancient aisle columns reused in sculptural niches.



Ill. 42 An isometric reconstruction of the floor plan and structural elements of the Lateran Basilica Constantiniana.

However, her mother Eutropia was allowed to keep a palace on imperial property for her residence in Rome. She had supported her son-in-law in the aftermath of the Italian campaign, publicly announcing that Maxentius was a bastard rather than the legitimate heir of Maximian; and thus augmenting the claims of Constantine to western rule. Sometime in this period she converted to Christianity, and eventually made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and patronized a church at Mamre. Constantine seems to have always treated her with great respect.[44] While in Rome for the Decennalia, he saw to it that his own mother was elevated to a position of equality with his mother-in-law. He gave Helena a palace in which she could reside with the splendor of an empress mother on the Sessorian estate a few hundred yards above the Lateran complex at the eastern edge of the city. Ancient inscriptions found near here indicate that Helena sponsored the building of an aquaduct *(Aqua Augustea)* and restored a bathhouse *(Thermae Helenae)* between her *Palatium Sessorianum* and the Porta Maggiore sometime during the next decade when she made visits to Rome and lived in this region. Under the influence of her son, Helena also converted to Christianity, and became a pious benefactor of the faith. In Rome, she had a large hall inside her palace transformed into a basilican chapel for the worship of the imperial court. It seems that an imperial architect added an apse at the rear of the room as a focus for worship, and installed two arcades across the hall dividing it into three separate bays for worshipers—presumably one each for the imperial family, court officers, and palace workers. The *Liber Pontificalis* recorded that its original



Ill. 43 A fresco by Gagliardi of the interior of the old Lateran Basilica, showing the green speckled side aisle columns reused in niches of the Baroque church (1650).

designation was the *Basilica in Palatio Sessoriano;* however, because of her later pilgrimage to the Holy Land,and the deposition of supposed relics of the crucifixion in this sanctuary, it was renamed *Santa Croce in Gerusalemme*. After the death of Helena, it was ceded to the papacy and was employed for public worship. By the twelfth century, a bell tower and a columned porch had been added to its west front, and monastic buildings attached to its south flank; finally in the eighteenth century, Gregorini redesigned the west facade and inner nave in a grand neo-classical style. Little remains from the old basilica of Helena today except some of the palace walls into which the chapel was built on the exterior of the north flank, and a few ancient columns reused on the inside of the nave of the modern church.[45]

While Constantine was inspecting the Lateran Basilica and socializing with Catholic clergy in the summer of 315, he made the acquaintance of Pope Sylvester, who would serve as the Bishop of Rome during most of the years he reigned as the first Christian emperor. The ancient biography of this prelate seems to indicate that it was about this time that “the Augustus Constantine at the request of Sylvester the Bishop constructed the Basilica for the Blessed Peter the Apostle.” Since the episcopal primacy of the Roman bishop was based on his claim of succession from Peter, Sylvester no doubt would have encouraged the newly zealous Christian emperor to expend his generosity in this manner.[46] The chief Apostle of Christ had been martyred in the first century at a racing arena across the Tiber River out beyond the western end of Rome. Christians had buried Peter in a garden between this circus and the *Mons Vaticanus,* which rose steeply above the area. A Roman bishop of the second century had erected an aedicule with two

columns, a projecting slab and a gabled niche over the apostolic tomb that came to be known as the "Trophy of St. Peter." By the fourth century, a cemetery of pagan and Christian tombs had superseded the racing arena. Constantine seems to have given families who owned tombs in the Vatican cemetery about four years to remove loved ones. During the next few years, imperial architects moved tons of earth down from Vatican Hill to fill in all the tombs of the necropolis except that of Peter, and created a level surface to serve as the foundation for a martyrial basilica in honor of the Apostle. Then they enclosed the Petrine Trophy in a beautiful shrine, and built a monumental church focused upon the apostolic shrine set in a transept in front of the rear apse. The *Liber Pontificalis* recorded that the ancient Latin name for this edifice was the *Basilica Beato Petro Apostolo*. The old Constantinian church lasted with minor modifications until Renaissance popes had it dismantled and reconstructed as the modern *San Pietro in Vaticano* between 1506 and 1626. An aerial view toward the eastern front of the modern church shows its position between the Tiber River and Vatican Hill. The seventeenth-century classical style facade of Maderno frames the eastern portals; but at the bottom of the papal staircase to the right of the narthex stands the dramatic Baroque statue by Bernini which commemorates the "Vision of Constantine," with the emperor on his horse gazing up to the celestial revelation by which he was converted to belief in the Christian Deity before the Battle of the Mulvian Bridge. As in the rebuilt Lateran nave of Borromini, Baroque arcades replaced classical colonnades in the redesigned Vatican nave of Maderno; yet, just as old columns from the ancient church were reused in the former, so too were old columns reused in the latter. Embedded within the four pillars supporting the dome of



Ill. 44 A view of the eastern facade of the Basilica Beato Petro Apostolo, now San Pietro in Vaticano, located between the Tiber River and the Vatican Hill at the west end of Rome.

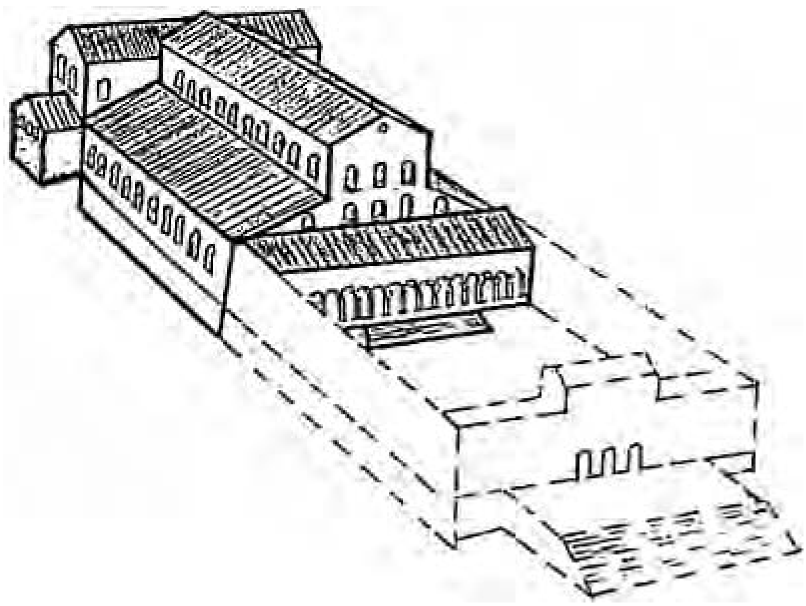
Michelangelo are sculptural niches framed with pairs of undulating spiral columns salvaged from the Constantinian basilica. These delicate marble columns inspired the bronze altar canopy of Bernini which majestically covers the high altar in the Baroque San Pietro (Ills. 44 and 45). Ancient evidence reveals how the old columns were originally used. The *Liber Pontificalis* described how Constantine “enclosed the tomb of Peter all around” with an immovable monument, encircled it with Cyprian bronze, and covered it with an ornate canopy supported by beautiful spiral columns. Modern archaeological work has revealed that the immovable monument was a solid casing of marble blocks in which Constantinian architects enclosed the Petrine Trophy—the western end of this is still visible above the altar in the subterranean Chapel of St. Peter. Found around this monument are portions of a raised pavement into which channels were cut for bronze railings and holes were drilled for column bases. A fifth-century ivory casket carving discovered near Pola depicting the Constantinian Shrine of Peter verifies this information, and permits a hypothetical reconstruction of the west end of the ancient church. With the gleaming gold of the apsidal decorations, the sinuous curves of the spiral columns, the shimmering color of the bronze railings, and the flickering light and aromatic odors of the chandelier oil, the Petrine Shrine of Constantine was a beautiful monument to the saint and an



Ill. 45 Interior of the Baroque San Pietro, but with the ancient spiral marble columns reused in piers for the dome of Michelangelo to the left of the Bernini altar canopy.

enchanting focus for the church dedicated to him. Archaeological work under the floor of the modern church has uncovered significant portions of the foundation walls of the

ancient apse and nave, and found ancient Constantinian columns—giving some idea of the plan and dimensions of the original basilica. An engraving by Antonio Lafréri of 1575, and a drawing by Domenico Tasselli in 1611 of the exterior of the old basilica, show the eastern atrium and high central roof of the original edifice; while a fresco by Gagliardi in 1650 of the old interior illustrates the trabeated colonnade and flat ceiling in the nave of the church. Altogether, the sources reveal a large and impressive form for the original St. Peter's Basilica. Constructed between *ca.* 319 and 329, it had a long central nave flanked with double lower side aisles. A full transept separated the nave from the apse, and gave focus to the Constantinian Shrine for Peter's tomb, which was positioned on the front line of the apse and projected out into the transept on a raised pavement. The full crossing between the nave and apse gave the edifice the symbolic floor plan of a Latin cross. The addition of an atrium in the east front and a mausoleum on the south side later in the century completed the form of the original church. At 119 meters in length, the Basilica for the Blessed Peter the Apostle was the largest of all the Christian basilicas of Constantinian Rome. It would become

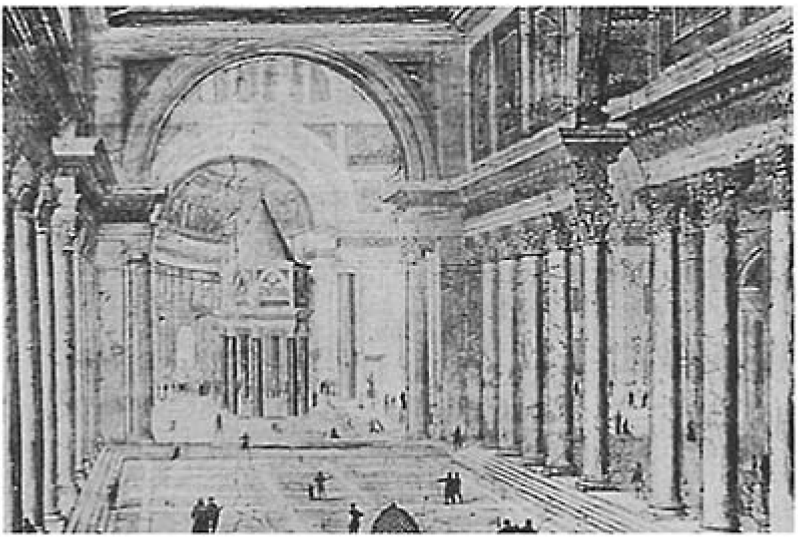


Ill. 46 An isometric reconstruction of the exterior plan and structure of the Vatican Basilica Beato Petro Apostolo.

an important pilgrimage destination and an influential architectural model in Europe (Ills. 46 and 47).[47]

The Liber *Pontificalis* also asserted that it was Pope Sylvester who suggested and Constantine who constructed the *Basilica Beato Paulo Apostolo* south of Rome between the *Via Ostiense* and the Tiber River where St. Paul had been buried after his first-century

martyrdom. This assertion was only partially correct, however, for Constantine merely built a small basilican chapel at the site. It was the papal program of stressing the dual apostolic foundation of the Roman see, and the increasing popularity of the *doctor gentium* among pagan intellectuals that led to the erection of the grand Pauline Basilica along the Ostian Way as the near equal to the great Petrine Basilica at the Vatican site during late antiquity. The emperors Theodosius I, Valentinian II, and Arcadius patronized its construction in the last decades of the fourth century, and Theodosius' daughter Galla Placidia and Pope Leo I provided its magnificent internal decorations in the early fifth century (*ca.* 380–450). The old church lasted in its original form until severely damaged by fire in 1823. An engraving by Rossini, however, indicates that the rear apse and glorification arch, and parts of the right aisle colonnades survived the disaster. The papacy decided to rebuild it along its ancient lines in the mid-nineteenth century, and thus *San Paolo fuori le Mura* offers an



Ill. 47 A fresco by Gagliardi of the interior of the old Vatican Basilica, showing the trabeated colonnade of the nave and medieval altar canopy over Peter's tomb (1650).

example of what the great Christian basilicas of Constantinian Rome looked like in antiquity. It had an atrium before its front facade like the Petrine Basilica. The nave, however, used the more ornate arcaded colonnades rather than the simpler trabeated ones employed in the Lateran and Vatican churches. Descriptions and illustrations of the original church, and discoveries made during the rebuilding campaign show that the ancient edifice was a grand double-aisled transeptial basilica about 90 meters long. The longitudinal sweep of the central nave with its coffered ceiling, and the lower side aisles

with their colonnades are clearly seen in the modern structure. The ornate canopy rising above the tomb of the Apostle, and the beautiful apse shimmering behind it may reflect what the *Liber Pontificalis* said about the ancient Lateran and Vatican apsidal decorations (Ills. 48 and 49).[48]

The dedication of Constantine to the religion of Christ inspired him to add several martyrial-cemeterial basilicas to the list of churches he and his family built around Rome. On the *Via Appia* to the south of the city, he constructed a church originally known as the *Basilica Apostolorum* because the bones of Peter and Paul had been taken here during the dark days of the Valerian persecution for safe keeping. The relics had been returned to the Vatican and Ostian sites by the time Constantine began his church-building program; yet, this place remained popular because of its association with



Ill. 48 A view of the exterior of the Basilica Beato Paulo Apostolo, now San Paolo fuori le Mura to the south of Rome.



Ill. 49 Interior of the Pauline Basilica reconstructed in the mid-nineteenth century according to its ancient plan.

the Apostles and its location over extensive catacombs. The famous soldier-martyr Sebastian (*ca.* 304) was entombed here, so the basilica was eventualy renamed after him, and is now known as *San Sebastiano fuori le Mura*. The original edifice was about 75 meters long, and was constructed in an elongated U-floor plan with a high central nave and one lower side aisle running all the way around the rear end. It was completed fairly early (*ca.* 313–20), and served as the model for the four lesser Constantinian martyrial churches. Behind the seventeenth-century neo-classical facade and nave reconstructions of Vesanzio, significant parts of the side walls and rear apse of the ancient church are still extant.

Out off the *Via Labicana* to the southeast of Rome, the emperor ordered the erection of a *Basilica Beatis Martyribus Marcellino et Petro* for a beloved priest and exorcist of the Roman church killed in the "Great Persecution." The original church of *SS Marcellino e Pietro fuori le Mura* (*ca.* 315–26) was built along the same lines and dimensions as the Appian basilica, but had an imperial mausoleum attached to its east front. Constantine initially planned to have himself buried here, but later changed his mind and used it for his mother. The old basilica has been replaced by a modern parish church with arcaded columns on the front facade. However, the ruins of the *Mausoleum Helenae* still rise majestically behind it.

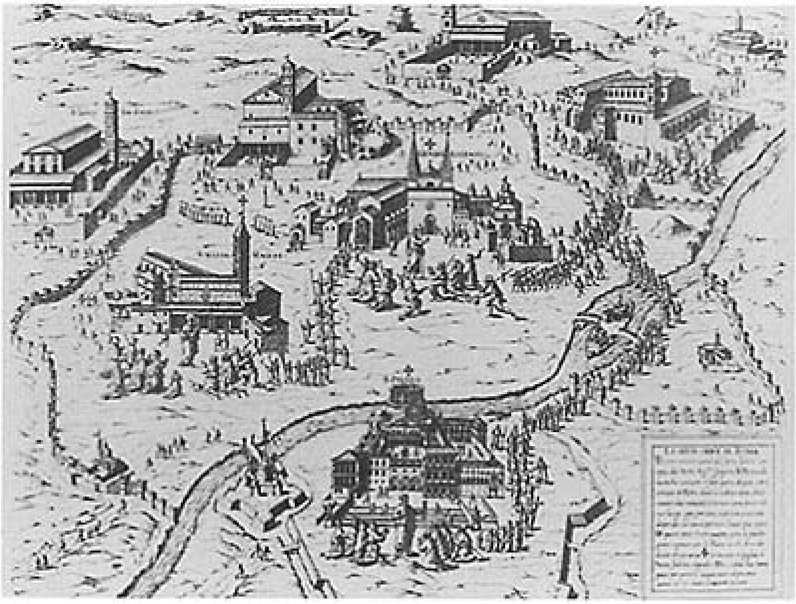
Besides the six basilicas which were under construction or being planned by 315, there were two others which would round out the Constantinian church-building program at Rome. A little beyond the northeastern wall of the city and along the *Via Tiburtina,* Constantine later commissioned another martyrial-cemeterial basilica to be erected in honor of St. Lawrence, a famous martyr of the Valerian Persecution, in the Verano

Cemetery. The *Liber Pontificalis* called it the *Basilica Beato Laurentio Martyri* (*ca.* 326–35). It was built along the same lines as the Appian and Labicana basilicas, but was the largest of these churches, reaching a length of almost 100 meters. It was dismantled in the early Middle Ages, and replaced by a composite church, made up of a late sixth-century chapel and an early thirteenth-century nave, the *San Lorenzo fuori le Mura* of today. Little is left of the old Constantinian basilica, except some underground foundations, and possibly some salvaged columns reused in the chancel of the medieval church.

Toward the end of his life, Constantine assented to the request of his daughter Constantina to construct a church in honor of St. Agnes, a young female martyr of the tetrarchic persecutions (*ca.* 304), several miles north of the city wall off the *Via Nomentana.* The *Liber Pontificalis* referred to it in Latin as the *Basilica Sanctae Martyris Agnae,* and it was built like the other martyrial-cemeterial basilicas with a high central nave and a single lower side aisle running all the way around its rear end. A small medieval church of the seventh century was constructed close to the old edifice as at the Tiburtina site; yet, here the ancient basilica of *Sant' Agnese fuori le Mura* (*ca.* 335–50) was not torn down, but just allowed to decay gradually through the centuries. Today its impressive ruins spread down an open field for its original length of 90 meters, and its side walls still rise heavenward to a height of 25 meters—giving a vivid impression of the vast size of Constantinian churches. Even better preserved is the mid-fourth century *Mausoleum Constantinae,* which Constantine's daughter built as a tomb for herself and her beloved aunt Constantia off to the left front side of the basilica. This structure exhibits a 22.5-meter-wide rotunda on its lower level and a drum carrying a dome on its upper story. A series of double columns supporting arches separate an outer ambulatory from the central sanctuary on the inside of the edifice. Lovely fourth- and fifth-century mosaics decorate the ceiling of the ambulatory and the two lateral apses of *Santa Costanza,* with the one on the right side depicting Christ handing St. Peter the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven.[49]

The popes as successors of St. Peter were being given more than keys by Constantine. The first Christian emperor and his family were handing over to Pope Sylvester and his episcopal successors a magnificent set of eight Christian basilicas which began the Christianization of the city at its outer edges. Built between 312 and 350, extending from 75 to 119 meters in length, able to hold thousands of the faithful for worship services and funerary banquets, these impressive edifices initiated the transformation of Rome from an ancient pagan capital to the medieval *Apostolica Sedes*. Although Constantine cautiously avoided the pagan core of Rome in his church construction program, nevertheless, he encircled it with so many and such large Christian basilicas that he made it very difficult for travelers entering or leaving the city not to notice these imposing structures. The famous engraving of *Le sette chiese di Roma* by Antonio Lafréri in 1575 depicted the seven great pilgrimage churches of Rome before they were rebuilt in the Baroque Era. In the center is the ancient *San Giovanni,* and to the upper left behind it *Santa Croce;* in the foreground is the ancient *San Pietro,* but with the half-finished dome of Michelangelo rising over it; and counter-clockwise from the upper right are the old *San Paolo, San Sebastiano,* and *San Lorenzo;* and below the latter is the fifth century papal basilica of *Santa Maria Maggiore* (Ill. 50). This historical illustration reveals that Constantine constructed six of the seven most important churches of Rome, and thus changed the public topography of the pagan city forever. By the time he left Italy to return to Trier in

the winter of 315–16, his words and actions were making it clear that his commitment to the Christian Deity was affecting his imperial policy.[50]



Ill. 50 An engraving by Lafréri of Le sette chiese di Roma, illustrating the pilgrimage churches of medieval Rome: San Giovanni, Santa Croce, and Santa Maria Maggiore within the walls, and counterclockwise from the bottom San Pietro, San Paolo, San Sebastiano, and San Lorenzo outside the walls of the city—with six of them Constantinian in origin (1575).

VII
THE EASTERN CRUSADE AND THE NICENE COUNCIL

> When the emperor thus beheld the Church agitated on account of both these causes, he convoked a General Council, summoning all the bishops by letter to meet him at Nicaea in Bithynia.
>
> Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* I. 8

In the decade following his Decennalia, the political alliance and religious agreement between Constantine and Licinius would crumble, and the two emperors would struggle for supremacy in the Roman world. First, they quarreled over the appointment of a Caesar in Italy, and fought two battles by which Constantine gained control of the Illyrian and Balkan provinces (316–17). Then, they carried on a "cold war" over religion, with Constantine expanding his support for the Christian Church and Licinius affirming his loyalty to the pagan cults. Finally, a campaign against barbarians in Licinian territory by Constantine and a persecution of Christians in the east by Licinius ignited a "holy war" in which Constantine and the Christian cause triumphed over Licinius and the pagan gods (323–24). In the aftermath of his victory, Constantine would proclaim Christianity the favored religion in the Roman Empire, and would extend his imperial beneficence to the eastern Church. When he found that the eastern clergy were divided over the definition of the Deity and the celebration of Easter, the pious emperor climaxed his political triumphs by summoning an Ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church, and by uniting its episcopal leaders around a definitive creed for the Christian faith and a common day for the Easter festival (325).[1]

The relations between Constantine and Licinius seemed amicable during the early years of their alliance. They had confirmed their bond through a family marriage, and defeated their enemies. They had restored property to the persecuted Christians, and given freedom of worship to their subjects. They had ruled jointly as Augusti over the Roman Empire, and appeared as imperial comrades and hunting companions in the recut Hadrianic tondi on the Arch of Constantine.[2] However, severe tensions were developing beneath the surface harmony. Licinius had been named Augustus of the west at the Council of Carnuntum and assigned the role of retaking Italy from Maxentius. The illness of Galerius and his conflicts with Maximin had diverted Licinius from this task, and allowed Constantine to conquer Italy and assume the title of first Augustus. The older ruler became resentful of the political success of his younger colleague. While the co-emperors had agreed upon an official policy of religious toleration for all beliefs, Constantine had expanded his patronage to the Christian Church and Licinius had renewed his devotion to the pagan cults. Eastern Christians had begun to envy the imperial largess their western brethren were enjoying, and to offer fervent prayers in

support of the Christian ruler. Licinius became jealous of the popularity of Constantine in his domains.[3]

Constantine attempted to deal with the Italian problem in a diplomatic manner in order to strengthen the political and familial bonds between himself and Licinius. During his trip to Italy in 315, he had given his half-sister Anastasia in marriage to the senator Bassianus. This was a marital tie with the proper social standing for his sister, and should have augmented his political bond with Licinius as Senecio, the brother of Bassianus, was an official in the domains of the eastern Augustus.[4] Over the next year, sons were born to both emperors: Licinianus to Licinius and Constantia in mid-315; and Constantinus II to Constantine and Fausta in August 316. These were happy events for both courts, and should have strengthened the familial ties between the imperial brothers-in-law.[5] However, while enjoying the birth of his first son from Fausta at Arles, Constantine seems to have sensed the rising tensions in his relations with Licinius. He therefore dispatched his half-brother Julius Constantius, who was studying rhetoric in southern Gaul, with a political proposal to Licinius at Sirmium late in the summer of 316. He suggested that Bassianus be appointed Caesar in Italy. By giving up direct rule over this region, Constantine appears to have wanted to eliminate the Italian Diocese as a cause of contention between himself and Licinius. By setting up a Caesar with connections to both Augustan courts, he seems to have wished to strengthen the political bond between himself and his co-emperor. He probably hoped that this arrangement might prepare the way for the naming of Crispus as a second Caesar, and the establishment of a dynastic tetrarchy headed by himself and composed of his relatives. Since Constantine had conquered Italy in a hard-fought campaign and achieved the senior Augustanship by a decree of the Senate, he did not need to relinquish this territory or to seek the assent of Licinius. His proposal appears to have been both generous and sincere.[6]

Licinius not only refused to accept the political plan of Constantine, but also attempted to undermine the familial bond between Bassianus and the western Augustus. He employed Senecio, who appears to have been serving as a *dux limitis* (border general) along the Danube, to seduce his brother to turn against Constantine, and to assemble forces to take control of Italy for the eastern Augustus. Officials loyal to Constantine informed the emperor of these developments, and his traitorous brother-in-law was caught and condemned. Constantine demanded that Licinius send Senecio to him for punishment; but Licinius refused, and even had the statues of Constantine overturned at Emona on the border between their respective domains. Both emperors prepared for war.[7]

After residing at Trier through the winter of 315–16, Constantine had toured the southeastern cities of Gaul, and remained in Arles during the summer of 316 for the birth of his second son. The Bassianus affair forced him to travel to northern Italy, with a visit to Verona in the early autumn. When relations broke down with Licinius, he gathered 20,000 horse and foot soldiers from his southern domains, and, with his characteristic celerity, led his troops some 200 miles across the eastern Alps and into Licinian territory in Pannonia. After his victory over Maximin, Licinius had spent a year residing in Antioch, and campaigning on the Persian frontier. In the following year, he had returned to Europe and campaigned against the Goths along the Danube. By the summer of 316, he had set up court at Sirmium in Pannonia. When hostilities broke out with Constantine, he assembled a force of 35,000 horse and foot soldiers, and marched west to meet his foe. The opposing armies converged in a great plain between the Drave and Save Rivers

below the town of *Cibalae* (Vinkovci) on 8 October 316. The ensuing battle lasted all day, with initial skirmishing from a distance by bows and arrows, then fierce fighting at close quarters with swords and spears. Constantine led a cavalry charge from his right wing late in the day, broke the ranks of the Licinian army, and put the foe to flight—20,000 enemy soldiers perished in the hard-fought Battle of Cibalae. Under cover of darkness, Licinius fled back to Sirmium (Sremska Mitrovica) with the remnant of his cavalry.[8]

Licinius collected his family and treasures at Sirmium, and retreated south-east across Dacia and into Thrace. Along the way, he ignored the position and insulted the prestige of Constantine by elevating Valens, a border general in the region, to the rank of Augustus. With the aid of the latter, he raised a large army in the vicinity of Hadrianople. After repairing a broken bridge over the Save, Constantine divided his troops and pursued his enemy to the southeast. He sent a small force ahead to follow Licinius, while he led the bulk of his army through the Balkans to secure his rear. After a short stay in Serdica, he established his base at Philippi. Licinius dispatched envoys to Constantine with an offer of peace. Confident from his victory at Cibalae and angered by the elevation of Valens, Constantine rebuffed the overture. The opposing forces met to do battle on the *Campus Ardiensis* (a plain above the Arda River) in January 317. Both sides fought fiercely, and inflicted heavy injuries on each other until darkness interrupted the indecisive struggle. Licinius retreated during the night, but moved his army north toward Beroea. Constantine assumed that his foe was fleeing to the Bosporus Strait, and led his troops east toward Byzantium. Licinius had lost the most in the battles, but still had an army in the rear of his opponent. Constantine had gained the most from the war, but found his lines of communication cut by his enemy. Both rulers recognized the need to negotiate.[9]

Thus, when Licinius sent a confidant named Mestrianus to discuss peace, Constantine was ready to listen this time. However, Constantine insisted upon the following conditions: Licinius had to recognize his status as senior Augustus and follow his orders on imperial policy; he must depose Valens and return him to a private station; and he had to hand over control of considerable territory to him for all the trouble he had caused. Constantine forcefully communicated his anger to the envoy, and Licinius hastily indicated his acceptance of the conditions. During the following months, the terms of the peace treaty were put into effect. Licinius recognized Constantine as his superior in the government; and he not only deposed Valens, but even executed his hapless ally to assure his brother-in-law of his loyalty. Constantine took control of the Dioceses of Pannoniae and Moesiae. This great band of territory extended through southeastern Europe from the Adriatic to the Aegean Seas, and from the Danube River down to the Greek islands. Located within it were eighteen imperial provinces, numerous military bases, several minting centers, and three imperial residences (Sirmium, Serdica, and Thessalonica). Constantine thereafter directly governed eight of the twelve dioceses of the Roman Empire. Licinius was left with only Thracia in Europe, and Asiana, Pontica, and Oriens in the Near East. The treaty concluding this war made Constantine the senior Augustus in territory as well as in titulature. From his new imperial residence at Serdica in the Balkans on 1 March 317, he named himself and Licinius consuls; and proclaimed his sons Crispus and Constantine II, and his nephew Licinianus Caesars. These actions

indicated that concordia was once again restored between the Augusti, but that Constantine was henceforth to have the controlling voice in imperial policy.[10]

Unfortunately, the renewed concord between the emperors was merely formal, and the peace in the empire very fragile. The political conditions which had linked Constantine and Licinius in a mutually beneficial alliance had disappeared—they had defeated their mutual enemies, and now viewed each other as political opponents. The cultural consensus which had united them in a common religious policy had collapsed—they had abandoned their neutral syncretism, and now touted specific deities as their divine patrons. The civil war had increased the tensions in their political alliance, and had weakened the bonds of their familial relationship. Only if Licinius was willing to follow the lead of Constantine and honor the conditions of the treaty of 317 was there a chance for a lasting peace between them. However, personal dynastic ambitions and diverging religious positions hindered the co-Augusti from maintaining harmony for very long. They were soon engaged in a "cold war," which ended in an apocalyptic struggle for the political control and religious destiny of the empire.

Over the next seven years, Constantine usually resided in his new eastern domains. Law code subscriptions and gold coin issues show that he regularly traversed this territory, with frequent visits and winter stays in *Sirmium* (Sremska Mitrovica) near the upper Danube, in *Serdica* (Sofia) below the lower Danube, and in *Thessalonica* (Salonica) above the Aegean. Crispus traveled with his father for a year after the civil war, gaining useful administrative experience. He was then sent to Trier with a trusted prefect to govern the west as a Caesar. Fausta remained with her husband through this period, and presented Constantine with several more imperial offspring—Constantine II had been born in August of 316; Constantius II arrived a year later; and between 318 and 325, a first daughter Constantina, a third son Constans, and a second daughter Helena joined the western imperial family. In order to emphasize the dynastic heritage of his family, Constantine issued special bronze half-folles from mid-317 to late 318 in key mints of his old western domains (Trier, Rome, Aquileia) and his new eastern regions (Siscia and Thessalonica) celebrating the "divine ancestors" from which he and his sons were descended. These coins honored Claudius Gothicus, Constantius I and Maximian as the "Best Princes" or "Best Emperors," and reminded the old and new subjects of Constantine and his sons of the distinguished heritage from which their rulers were descended—the great Illyrian soldier emperors who had stopped the chaos of the previous century, and begun the restoration of Roman order. During the same years, Licinius normally employed *Nicomedia* (Izmit) as his imperial residence. He seems to have stayed within his Thracian and Pontican Dioceses on either side of the Bosporus Strait, jealously watching the expanding family and growing popularity of Constantine. Licinianus traveled with his parents, but was too young to be anything more than a nominal Caesar at this time. No other legitimate children joined the eastern imperial family. Constantia resided with Licinius through this period, and tried to be loyal both to her husband and his imperial ambitions, and to her brother and his new religion. It must have been a difficult task as she witnessed the increasing tensions between Licinius and Constantine. As Constantia and Licinianus were descendants of the same Illyrian emperors whom the coins of Constantine were honoring, Licinius should have followed his brother-in-law in using the new Divi types. Yet, he chose to ignore the Constantinian dynastic propaganda, and issued a different type of bronze coin which celebrated the

PROVIDENTIAE AUGG or CAESS ("To the Foresight of the Augusti or the Caesars"). Although he issued them for Constantine and his nephews as well as for himself and his son, the very fact that he used a different coin type showed that he was not willing to obey Constantine and that he had dynastic ambitions of his own.[11]

Although Constantine rotated the consular positions by which the Roman year and governmental documents were dated between himself, Licinius, and the Caesars, both Augusti recognized each other and the Caesars on their coins for a few years after the civil war; nevertheless, the diverging religious positions, conflicting imperial legislation, and differing coin motifs adopted by the Augusti in this period belied the surface harmony and presaged a coming struggle.[12]

Since his conversion, Constantine had associated with Catholic clergy, had studied Christian literature, and had intervened in Church affairs. He had come to think that the Christian God had entrusted him with his imperial position, and had elected him to propagate the Christian religion. As the years of his imperial reign progressed, his commitment to his personal faith increased, and his religious beliefs increasingly affected his public policies.[13]

Some of the legislation Constantine enacted in these years reflected his growing desire to promote Christianity. During his decennial year of 315–16, he had outlawed the branding of the face and death by crucifixion as punishments in criminal law—the former out of respect for the biblical doctrine that the human visage was created in the image of divine beauty, and the latter out of reverence to the cross. Over the next six years, he issued three laws permitting the manumission of slaves in churches. The first two allowed masters to bring their slaves before a Christian assembly and declare them free in the presence of a bishop; a written record of the transaction by the bishop guaranteed Roman citizenship to the freed slaves. The third reiterated the process for freeing slaves in the churches, and added a new provision allowing clergy to manumit their slaves by the mere expression of their will in private. The first law is no longer extant, but was probably issued in the west during the Decennalia (315). The second and third have survived in ancient law codes, and were issued in eastern Europe to the bishops Protogenes (316), and Ossius (321), confirming the Christian inspiration behind these laws. Although Christians practiced a service ethic and believed that they could serve God and humanity in any station, their scriptures proclaimed that all people were spiritually equal in the sight of God. By making the manumission of slaves easier in the Christian churches than in the Roman courts, Constantine linked the concept of freedom with Christianity in the popular mind. By allowing bishops to preside over the process of manumission, he elevated the status of the Catholic clergy in the empire. The latter was the aim of much of the Christian legislation of Constantine. He had granted the Catholic clergy service exemptions and monetary subventions immediately after his conversion—giving them a privileged position equal to that of pagan priests and Roman soldiers. He continued to elevate their status in imperial law with other enactments over the course of his reign. Sometime during the decade after 312, he seems to have exempted the clergy from all taxation. And at least by 318, he granted a special privilege to Christian bishops—they could take appeals from litigants in the Roman secular courts, and offer judgments that were final and not subject to review. Constantine had learned that Christ and the Apostle Paul had instructed Christians to settle their disputes in the churches rather than in the courts, and that a system of episcopal arbitration had evolved throughout the Christian

Church for this very purpose. Roman society was quite litigious, and Roman justice was very expensive. As in many modern countries, the rich seem to have had a better chance of obtaining favorable judgments than the poor. By making *episcopale iudicium* a valid alternative to the Roman legal system Constantine was attempting to give the poor a fair chance at justice and unclog the imperial courts on the one hand, and to respect Christian traditions and raise the status of the Catholic bishops on the other.[14]

The building of Christian churches in imperial cities and the appearance of Christian symbols on Constantinian coinage in the half-dozen years after the Decennalia also reflected the growing sense of a Christian mission in the emperor and gave a more public presence to his religion in the empire. By November 318, the new cathedral basilica had been completed at the east end of Rome, and the other martyrial basilicas were rising in a great arc around the ancient capital. Through imperial monetary subsidies and local congregational initiatives, Christian churches were rising in other cities of the empire as well. While these building campaigns were progressing, the pagan deities were being taken off and Christian signs were beginning to appear on the coinage of Constantine. Mars, the original Olympian protector god of the western Caesars, was removed from the coins of most of his western mints between 315 and 316, and from the coins of his new eastern mints between 317 and 318. Sol, the ancestral syncretistic deity Constantine had adopted after his break with Maximian and the tetrarchs, remained on his coins for a few more years as a bridge between paganism and Christianity. As the Christian faithful worshiped on the "day of the Sun," and the Bible employed light imagery in calling the promised messiah the "Sun of Righteousness" and in describing Christ as a "light unto the world," there were points of contact between Christianity and the Solar cult. Constantine himself had followed a religious evolution from Olympian polytheism through Solar syncretism to Christian monotheism, and the great Lactantius had taught that this was the proper path from pagan falsehood to Christian truth. However, his increasing knowledge of Catholic doctrine and his growing desire to promote the Christian religion finally inspired the emperor to remove Sol from the coins produced by most of his mints between 318 and 321. Traditional religious motifs were replaced by military or secular designs—often accompanied with Christian symbols. Since the emperor had been portrayed with a Christ monogram and a cross scepter on his Decennalia medallions, mint supervisors thereafter felt free to use Christian signs as control marks or decorative embellishments on imperial coinage. This even occurred on some of the last Sol coins, for instance, when crosses were employed as marks of issue. A Greek cross was put beside the image of Sol on the reverse of the bronze coins issued at the Ticinum mint in 316; and a Tau cross in a wreath was put beside the god on the reverse of the bronze coins issued at Rome in 318. The officials at these mints may have just been exercising the new freedom they sensed under Constantine to use the symbols of Christianity in their work; or they may also have been making a religious statement reflecting the belief of the emperor that Christ, not the ball of fire in the sky called Sol, was the real "light of the world." As the Sol and Divi bronze coins were being phased out, a new type replaced them as the standard bronze folles from the mints of Constantine for the next two years (late 318–320). The obverse depicted the emperor in a high crested helmet with an inscription naming him "the Greatest Augustus," or "the Pious and Happy Augustus"; while the reverse showed two victories holding a votive shield over an altar



Ill. 51 Coin of Constantine depicting him wearing a high crested war helmet marked with a Christogram on the obverse, and two victories beside an altar celebrating "the Happy Victories of the Perpetual Princeps" on the reverse (319).

within an inscription celebrating the VICTORIAE LAETAE PRINC PERP ("the Happy Victories of the Perpetual Princeps"). Officials at the Siscia mint allowed the central bar of the imperial helmet on the obverse to be decorated with Christograms or crosses in some of the issues of this type (Ill. 51); and officials at London and Ticinum used Greek crosses on the reverse altars of some of these coins as marks of issue at their mints. In doing so, they were reflecting the emperor's veneration of Christian signs and his practice of employing them on his war helmet and military standards. The Victoriae type was replaced by a new bronze type showing the emperors or their sons in various poses on the obverse, but depicting two barbarian captives beneath a war standard within the inscription VIRTUS EXERCIT ("the Valor of the Army") on the reverse for the next couple of years (319–21). In the four mints of Ticinum, Aquileia, Siscia, and Thessalonica across Constantinian territory between Italy and Greece, stylized Christograms with a pin-headed shaft or iota slashed through the Chi (☧) were employed as marks of issue and/or imperial rank in the left field on the reverse of some of the issues in this type. The appearance of the same Christian sign on this coin type from several mints probably indicates that the decision to use it came from the imperial court itself. The employment of the Christ monogram in a martial setting publicized the story of the battlefield conversion of the emperor and propagated his belief in the power of the sacred symbols of Christ. By the time these coins were circulating around the empire, very few of the subjects of Constantine could have been in doubt as to the religious direction in which their senior emperor desired to lead them.[15]

Since his victory over Maximin Daia, Licinius had taken a religious path different from that of Constantine. He had indeed issued the "Edict of Milan" in the east in 313, and had hunted down and disposed of the wives, children, and key officials of the

persecuting tetrarchs. However, he had not done this out of a desire to aid the suffering Christians, but out of a desire to rid himself of political opponents. Once he was secure in his position as Augustus of the east, he seems to have come under the influence of Iamblichus of Apamea, the leading Neoplatonist of the day. This probably occurred while the emperor was traveling and campaigning in Syria in 313–14. Iamblichus was a charismatic philosopher-priest who was synthesizing Platonic philosophical teachings with traditional pagan rituals. His *De Mysteriis* elucidated a tripartite schema for ascending from the material world to the One via *theourgia*—"divine works" consisting of material sacrifices, mystical incantations, and advanced mathematical conceptualizations. His combination of traditional religion and intellectual speculation attracted a broad spectrum of pagan devotees, and linked them around Olympian Jupiter as the cultic focus of the Neoplatonic One. As his jealousy of the success of Constantine overshadowed his memory of the deaths of the persecutors, Licinius made himself the patron of this pagan revival, and made the disciples of Iamblichus members of his court circle. Contemporary letters indicate that such men were in the imperial entourage on the march to Sirmium in 316, and after the retreat to Nicomedia in 317. His defeats at the hands of Constantine do not seem to have changed the religious orientation of the eastern Augustus. It is true that he allowed Eusebius of Nicomedia to counsel his wife in the faith and advise him on Christian affairs after 317. However, he seems to have used the information he got from the Nicomedian bishop to harm rather than to help the Church. Thus, over the next few years while Constantine expanded his support for Christianity in the west, Licinius remained committed to paganism in the east.[16]

Aurelius Victor commented that the alliance between Constantine and Licinius was doomed to a short existence "because of their diverse characters." He contrasted how Constantine ended the penalty of crucifixion and protected the property of his subjects with how Licinius governed in cruelty and was guilty of parsimony. Other sources confirm the accuracy of this judgment and show that Licinius refused to follow Constantine in his legislation and governance. The eastern Augustus continued to use crucifixion as a criminal penalty, and failed to extend the legal favors and material benefits which the western Augustus was granting the Church in his domains. For the census of 321, Constantine not only employed the usual methods of assessment from earlier years, but even created a new official, the *peraequator census,* who was given the duty to accept appeals from citizens unhappy with their tax obligations. Licinius, on the other hand, changed the assessment of land units, issued new marriage and inheritance legislation, and used brutal coercion in order to increase the revenues of the state at the expense of his subjects. Constantine increased his popularity by following the mild policies of Constantius while Licinius damaged his reputation by imitating the harsh methods of Diocletian.[17]

Licinius diverged from the numismatic policies of his senior colleague as well, and issued coin denominations and propaganda motifs recalling those of the pagan tetrarchies. He chose to continue the Diocletianic gold *aurei* minted at 60 to the pound rather than to adopt the Constantinian gold *solidus* minted at 72 to the pound since 310. Both emperors, however, employed the reduced argentiferous *folles* which had emerged during the Second Tetrarchy, and were minted at 96 or more to the pound, and weighed only about 3 grams by 320. Licinius declined to follow Constantine in removing the gods from his coinage, and instead heavily emphasized his loyalty to Olympian Jupiter. Both during and

after the first civil war, his most common bronze type displayed the head of the emperor on the obverse within an inscription containing his name and titles, and depicted Jupiter on the reverse holding the globe of power within the inscription IOVI CONSERVATORI AUG ("To Jupiter the Protector of the Augustus"—Ill. 52). Though he employed the Providentiae type for limited bronze issues from his Heraclea and Nicomedia mints between 317–20, apparently to counter the Divi and Victoriae types minted by Constantine, Licinius used Jupiter on most of the gold and bronze types issued from his mints between the civil wars. On some of these he even advertised himself and his son as DD NN IOVII LICINII INVICTI AUG ET CAES ("Our Lords, the Unconquered Jovian Licinii, the Augustus and Caesar"). In so doing, he was proclaiming that he and his son were the true successors of the Illyrian



Ill. 52 Coin of Licinius depicting him wearing a laurel wreath on the obverse, and Jupiter holding out the globe of power with a Nike within an inscription honoring "Jupiter as the Protector of the Augustus" (316).

emperors Diocletian and Galerius, and the legitimate preservers of the pagan heritage of the Roman world. Licinius, of course, did not allow the use of Christian symbols on coins minted in his part of the empire. Through his religious associations, legislative actions, and coin types, it was obvious by 321 that Licinius wished to lead his subjects in a religious direction different from that of Constantine.[18]

It was in that year that the Augusti formally severed their political alliance and vigorously intensified their religious programs in preparation for a military contest to determine the political and religious future of the empire. Licinius had removed Constantine from most of the coinage produced at his Heraclea, Nicomedia, and Cyzicus mints by 320, and he began to explicitly advertise his dynasty as the "Jovians" on some of his coins thereafter. He also seems to have started a subtle persecution against the Christians in his domains about this time. These deliberate affronts and his annoying deviations on most issues of imperial policy were finally too much for the senior Augustus. Constantine had named Licinius and Licinianus to share the consulship for

321; but his patience with his recalcitrant colleague had been strained to breaking point by the beginning of the year. Therefore, he summoned Crispus to come to Sirmium, and in a formal ceremony in March Constantine withdrew his recognition from the Licinii as consuls, and named Crispus and Constantine II to replace them. He issued gold coins and medallions from the Sirmium mint celebrating the consulship and *quinquennalia* of his sons. Constantine would not share the consular designation with the eastern emperors again. He soon removed the Licinians from the coins of his mints, and emphasized himself and his sons in his numismatic propaganda in subsequent years. Licinius thenceforth nominated his own consuls; and although he restored Constantine to some of the eastern coinage, he did so in a way not very pleasing to the Christian Augustus—he paired him with the Olympian divinity Jupiter, whom Constantine had removed from his own coinage and whom he no longer recognized as divine. The diverging aims of the competing Augusti were thus clear by 321: the empire was going to be dominated by Constantine and become Christian, or it was going to be directed by Licinius and remain pagan. Religious maneuvers and military conflict over the next three years would decide the issue.[19]

After the imperial conference at Sirmium in early 321, Constantine expanded his public patronage of the Christian religion. In April 321, he issued his final constitution on the manumission of slaves in churches, and dedicated it to his Christian advisor Ossius. In July, he issued two laws allowing legacies to be left to the Catholic Church, and declaring Sunday to be a legal holiday. The former helped increase the wealth of the Church as many people hoped to atone for past sins through final bequests in their wills to their local congregations. The latter helped promote the services of the Church by transforming the first day of the Roman week from a day of work into a day of worship. The original law, which was preserved in the *Codex Theodosianus,* prohibited litigations and court cases to be held on Sunday. A later description of this law, which was contained in the *Vita Constantini* of Eusebius, explained the ultimate aims of the Sunday legislation in more detail:

> He also ordained that one day should be regarded as an occasion for prayers: that is the day which is truly the first and chief of all, the day of our Lord and Savior. The entire care of his court was entrusted to deacons and to other ministers consecrated to the service of God, and distinguished by gravity of life and every other virtue; while his trusty bodyguard, strong in affection and fidelity to his person, found in their emperor a teacher in the practice of piety, and like him held the salutary day of the Lord in honor, and performed on that day the devotions which he loved. The same observance was recommended by this blessed prince to all classes of his subjects since he earnestly desired to lead all humanity gradually to the worship of God. Accordingly, he enjoined all the subjects of the Roman Empire to observe the day of the Lord as a day of rest…

Although the old pagan term *dies Solis* ("day of the Sun") was used in the original Sunday legislation of Constantine, he made it quite clear which God he desired the populace to venerate on that day. He arranged for Christian worship to be held at his palaces, and he sometimes even gave sermons at these gatherings. He gave Christian

soldiers time off on Sundays to attend Catholic churches; while he forced pagan soldiers to assemble outside their military bases and recite a monotheistic prayer which he had composed in honor of his "Highest Deity"—whom everyone clearly knew was the God of the Christians. The imperial courts and the military camps of Constantine were thus becoming openly Christian and were setting examples for the remainder of the Roman Empire. Yet, the emperor's missionary zeal for the Christian religion had not diluted his pragmatic wisdom as an astute politician. He knew that a military conflict with Licinius was inevitable, and that he might garner more support across the empire for such a struggle if he was perceived as a "good emperor" who was defending religious freedom for all people even though he was offering favored status to Catholic believers. So, when Licinius broke their Milan agreement and began to persecute the Christians in the east, Constantine stuck to the spirit of the accord and protected the religious rights of all his subjects. In 321 he ended the exile and lifted the sanctions he had imposed upon Donatist clergy five years earlier so that Christian dissidents as well as the Catholic faithful might regard him as their champion. He continued to appoint pagans as well as Christians to important positions in his governmental and military hierarchies. And with the exception of private divination for malevolent purposes—to which good people of many religious persuasions objected—he continued to allow the practice of traditional pagan rituals at the same time that he was patronizing Catholic liturgical services. Over the next three years, his tolerant policies gained Constantine the respect and earned him the prayers of Christians and pagans alike all across the Roman world.[20]

While Constantine was expanding imperial support for Christianity in his domains, Licinius was initiating another persecution of the Church in the east. Eusebius of Caesarea was the metropolitan Bishop of Palestine at this time, and described the persecution in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* and *Vita Constantini*. He recounted how the eastern ruler began with subtle measures against ecclesiastical practices and ended with open attacks on the Christian laity and bishops. Licinius first prohibited bishops from traveling outside of their provinces or from attending episcopal councils. Since this had become the normal way of regulating Church beliefs and practices, and since several issues needed the attention of the bishops at this time, this travel injunction was very troubling. He then ruled that men were not allowed to offer instruction to women in Christian congregations, that men and women were to worship separately from one another, and that church services were to be held outside of city walls and in open fields. He voided the service exemptions which Constantine had granted the Catholic clergy, and permitted his officials to force them to perform decurial services. Since these measures interfered with Church practices and clerical duties, they were most vexatious. At the same time, Licinius began dismissing Christian laymen from governmental positions who refused to participate in pagan rites. He also reintroduced mandatory pagan sacrifices in the armies of his domains, and discharged Christian officers and soldiers who refused to comply. During his quindecennalia celebrations in 323, he allowed pagan officials to force Catholic clergy and laity to offer sacrifices, or be punished by exile or death. A number of Christians seem to have been martyred in eastern Anatolia over the next year. In such circumstances, it is no wonder that Christians began to view Licinius as a "tyrant" and "savage beast" who was enveloping his domains "in the darkness of a gloomy night," and to see Constantine as a "great emperor" and "pious prince" who was illuminating his regions "in the brilliance of a shining light." Constantine was familiar

with such imagery from his religious studies, and likewise came to view his conflict with Licinius as an apocalyptic struggle between the forces of light and truth and the minions of darkness and error.[21]

As their "cold war" became hotter, the hostile Augusti focused their attentions on their mutual borders in eastern Europe and the Aegean Basin. Constantine, who had normally used Sirmium and Serdica as imperial residences since 317, moved his court and transferred a large portion of his army to Thessalonica in early 323. Licinius stayed in Nicomedia, but expanded his military forces in Thrace through the year. Two incidents in 323 provided *casus belli* for the emperors. Sarmatian barbarians raided across the lower Danube River in the spring. Constantine reacted swiftly, defeated them in three battles over the summer, and chased them back across the river. However, some of his forces had to march through a part of the Thracian Diocese to finish their operations. Licinius protested that this action was a violation of his territory, and sent some "haughty" letters to Constantine ordering him to refrain from trespassing on his domains in the future. As the Roman Empire was still legally one state, and as Constantine was officially the senior ruler in it, he was justifiably angered at the *superba mandata* he received from his colleague. He had for some time been aware of the renewed oppression of eastern Christians, and now decided to take action on their behalf. In December 323, he issued a law ordering that a public beating or a heavy fine be given to imperial officials who forced Christians to participate in pagan sacrifices; and he dispatched this law to Licinius. The latter refused to comply, and increased his persecution of the Church in the east. Constantine thereafter could pose as a "good emperor" who wished to free his eastern subjects from the rule of a tyrant, and as a "divine agent" who was sent to liberate eastern Christians from a reign of terror. Licinius could claim that he was defending his legal domain, and that he was fighting for traditional paganism. Over the winter and spring of 324, both emperors prepared for war.[22]

After the end of his campaign against the Sarmatians, Constantine had returned to Thessalonica in the fall of 323, and ordered the building of a harbor which would be used as a base for naval operations against Licinius. He then went to Sirmium for the winter where he met his son Crispus, and they planned a joint campaign for the conquest of the east. Crispus had served his father well as Caesar in the British, Gallic, and Hispanic Dioceses since 318. He had successfully led campaigns against the Franci along the lower Rhine River in 319, and against the Alamanni in the upper Rhine area in 323; and governed his subjects in the same moderate style as his father and grandfather had before him. In recent years, he had issued bronze coins extolling the BEATA TRANQUILLITAS ("Blessed Tranquillity") which the provincial subjects of the northwest had long enjoyed under the Constantinian dynasty. One recent issue of this type at Trier depicted the Caesar carrying a shield marked with a Christogram—reflecting the story of his father's conversion, and revealing a Christian presence in his mint workshops. Crispus was a mature young man in his twenties, married, and well trained to serve as the second-in-command to his father by this time. He arrived at Sirmium with a large contingent of western troops and a firm conviction about the necessity for an eastern war.[23] Constantine and Crispus decided upon a two-pronged invasion of Licinian territory—Constantine would lead land forces against the Licinian army in Thrace and Crispus would lead sea forces against the Licinian navy in the Hellespont, with the aim of defeating Licinius in the vicinity of Byzantium on the European side and/or near

Nicomedia on the Asian side of the Bosporus Strait. The Augustus and Caesar marched out of Sirmium together early in the winter of 324. Constantine went to Thessalonica where he assembled a massive land army and completed the harbor facilities. Crispus went to Athens, and gathered a naval armada in its port of Piraeus. By late spring, he sailed north to join his father at Thessalonica. According to Zosimus, they had assembled an army of 120,000 foot and 10,000 horse soldiers, and a navy of 200 warships and assorted transport vessels. The numbers in Zosimus are often exaggerated, but this was surely the largest military force Constantine ever commanded as he had come to view his struggle with Licinius as a virtual crusade.[24]

When Licinius became aware of the military preparations of his enemies, he assembled even greater forces to protect his territories. He transported large numbers of land troops across the Bosporus Strait, and linked them up with his army in Thrace. He selected Hadrianople as the position where he would attempt to block the overland march of Constantine. He also ordered the construction of a large naval armada, and placed it under the command of an officer named Abantus. He designated the Hellespont Strait as the location where his navy would attempt to stop the maritime advance of Crispus. By the beginning of the summer of 324, his defensive forces were in place. According to Zosimus, he had gathered an army of 150,000 foot and 15,000 horse soldiers, and a navy of 350 warships. Again, these figures may be a little inflated, but this was certainly the greatest military force Licinius ever led as he knew that he was fighting for his very career.[25]

The conflict between Constantine and Licinius was not just political, but also religious—so the preparations for this war were not only material, but also spiritual. Thus, the forces of each emperor openly exhibited their religious affiliations. Constantine had removed pagan insignia and rites from his armies shortly after his conversion, and he had replaced them with Christian symbols and trappings. The emperor wore a helmet emblazoned with the Christogram, and his soldiers carried shields marked with the same sign. An honor guard of fifty men distinguished for their personal courage and Christian piety carried the Labarum at the front of Constantine's troops, and employed it as a magic talisman against his enemies. The emperor had a special tent shaped like a cross in which he prayed to the Christian Deity for inspiration before battles. And Catholic clergy accompanied the troops to assist in devotions and to pray for victories.

While Licinius had employed a syncretistic "Highest God" prayer and allowed some religious toleration in his armies after the "Edict of Milan," he had early identified Jupiter as his special divine patron, and had gradually reintroduced mandatory pagan rites in his military camps during his "cold war" with Constantine. The forces which Licinius assembled for the final conflict with his enemy were completely pagan in outward appearance. His military insignia included pagan designs, and his army camps contained pagan altars. Priests and soothsayers carried out traditional sacrifices and rites to obtain the help of the old gods. And prior to his first battle with Constantine, Licinius gathered his bodyguard and commanders together in a sacred grove for divine sacrifices, and declared that the outcome of the coming conflict would determine which emperor was correct in his religious policy, and which deity was the supreme power in the universe. Thus, the second civil war between Constantine and Licinius can rightfully be called a "religious crusade" or a "holy war" between classical paganism and the Christian religion.[26]

This climactic war would take place during the summer of 324, and would involve the combatants in several battles fought at the eastern tip of Europe, the western edge of Asia, and in the waters between the two continents (Map 5).



Map 5 The eastern crusade of 324.

In June, Constantine led his land army from Macedonia northeastward into Thrace, while Crispus followed with the fleet eastward across the Thracian part of the Aegean Sea. Late in the month, Constantine arrived at the outskirts of *Hadrianople* (Edirne). The topography around the city offers a strong defensive position against an attack from the west. Hadrianople is located on the southwestern flank of a steep mountain which rises above the confluence of two rivers to the south of it. The smaller Tonoseius (Tunca)

River flows from the north of Thrace (Bulgaria), and passes along the western side of the city until it turns east beneath it and runs into the larger Hebrus (Meriç) River. The latter flows from the northwest of Thrace, and passes along the southern side of the city where it receives the Tonoseius; then the enhanced Hebrus flows southward into the Thracian Sea above the island of Samothrace (the southern part of the river is the boundary between European Turkey and Greece today). In order to gain control of Thrace and of the plains stretching from Hadrianople to the Bosporus Strait, Constantine had to cross the Hebrus River and take the mountain above the city. However, Licinius had gotten there first, and, as the *Origo* recorded, "had filled up the sides of the steep mountain at Hadrianople with a huge army" arrayed in long battle lines. Constantine established his camp on the southwestern side of the Hebrus River, and planned a battle strategy which would overcome the better position and larger forces of his enemy. For several days he assembled his troops in battle formation as if he were going to have them charge across the river in a direct frontal assault against the Licinian army. But then he created a diversion by having the soldiers at one end of his lines cut down trees and pretend that they were building a bridge for a safer crossing. While this action distracted the Licinian forces, Constantine hid 800 of his best cavalry and 5,000 infantry and archers in a thick forest at the other end of his lines. On the morning of 3 July, the emperor led these men out of the forest and across a fordable section of the Hebrus River in a surprise attack against a side wing of the enemy lines. This maneuver threw the Licinian army into confusion, and allowed the rest of the Constantinian troops to ford the river en masse and drive the enemy lines back up the steep mountain above Hadrianople. During the course of the battle, Constantine directed the special Labarum guard to move the sacred Christian talisman to any area where his soldiers seemed to be faltering. This seemed to embolden his troops and to frighten the Licinian forces. Late in the day, Constantine led a cavalry charge in which he was wounded in the thigh, but by which he broke the last resistance of the enemy. Licinius retreated eastward through Thrace, but left over 30,000 of his troops dead on the battlefield according to Zosimus. Constantine took the enemy camp at Hadrianople, and received the surrender of thousands of the soldiers who had been left behind by the hasty flight of their commander. The astute military strategy and the potent Christian signs of Constantine had won the first battle in the crusade to free the suffering east from its "savage beast" (Ill. 53).[27]

Licinius retreated 150 miles southeast to Byzantium on the Bosporus Strait. He kept a few thousand of the troops he had led away from the defeat at Hadrianople with him in this well-fortified town at the eastern tip of Europe; and he had the rest of his forces ferried across the Bosporan waters to his western Asian domains. Licinius hoped that he would be able to block Constantine at the Bosporus while his admiral Abantus would be able to stop Crispus in the Hellespont. If either part of this fall-back strategy failed, he would have a land army awaiting him in Bithynia. After gaining control of Hadrianople, Constantine pursued Licinius through Thrace, and directed Crispus to break the blockade in the Hellespont and meet him at Byzantium. By the middle of the summer, the army of Constantine reached the outskirts of this old Greek colony which was located on a promontory at the southern end of the Bosporus Strait. The emperor had an earth ramp built up against a part of the land wall of the city, and then had a wooden tower moved up



Ill. 53 View over the Hebrus (Meriç) River to Hadrianople where Constantine defeated Licinius in July 324.

to the top of this ramp. He had some of his troops throw missiles down upon the defenders of the city from the tower, while he had others push battering rams and siegeengines up against the rest of the walls. These actions soon made Licinius realize that a prolonged stay in Byzantium was not possible. While Constantine was directing the siege at Byzantium, Crispus was breaching the blockade in the Hellespont. He made an astute decision to enter the narrow waters of the strait with a small fleet of 80 ships. Abantus opposed this entry with a large armada of 200 ships with which he felt he could easily surround and defeat the enemy forces. Yet, the large numbers and confined conditions of the Licinian navy worked to the advantage to Crispus, who was able to outmaneuver, hit, and sink many of the opposing ships. Abantus sailed back to the east end of the Hellespont to regroup his forces while Crispus brought in the remainder of his ships. On the next day near *Callipolis* (Gallipoli), the two fleets met each other for a final battle. Hard winds blew many of the Licinian ships against rocks, and allowed Crispus to win a total victory over his adversary. Abantus lost his own vessel, and barely escaped by swimming to the shore. All but four of the Licinian ships were destroyed or captured in the two naval battles in the Hellespont Strait. Crispus loaded provisions that he knew Constantine needed for the siege at Byzantium, and then sailed through the Sea of Marmora to join his father at the Bosporus Strait. When Licinius saw the Constantinian fleet approaching, and knew that he would soon be blockaded by sea as well as by land, he decided to retreat to Bithynia. He abandoned Byzantium, and sailed across the Sea of Marmora to Chalcedon (Kadiköy). Here, he reorganized his army, raised more forces—including even Gothic mercenaries, and worked to secure the northern section of his

Asian domains. He also promoted his Master of Offices Martinianus to the rank of Augustus, and dispatched him to secure the southern section of the Asian coast to the Hellespont. Mean-while, Constantine entered Byzantium by land and Crispus reached it by sea. The proud father and his son shared stories of their victories, and made plans for their final push against Licinius in Asia.[28]

In early September, Constantine transported his army up the Bosporus Strait to the mouth of the Black Sea. He landed his forces on the Asian side of the strait at a place called the Sacred Promontory. He drew up his battle formations, and marched south against his enemy. In the meantime, Licinius had assembled as large an army as he could at Chalcedon. He still had a significant portion of his forces from Thrace. Martinianus had brought up soldiers stationed on the Asian side of the Hellespont; and a contingent of Gothic troops under their chieftain Alica had joined him. When he learned that Constantine was approaching, he advanced a couple miles north toward *Chrysopolis* (Üsküdar—an Asian suburb of modern Istanbul at the bottom of the Bosporus Strait) to make his stand. Constantine had already arrived, and had set up his prayer tent to seek divine guidance for the coming conflict. On 18 September, Licinius drew up his battle lines with the images of the pagan gods placed among them. However, through previous defeats, he had developed a superstitious fear of the Christian Labarum of Constantine, and bid his men not to look at or attack it directly. After gaining the inspiration he needed, Constantine emerged from his tent and ordered his troops to make a direct frontal assault upon the enemy. In a single decisive charge, the forces of Constantine mowed down the soldiers of Licinius, leaving 25,000 of them dead on the field at Chrysopolis (Ill. 54). After this horrible defeat,



Ill. 54 View over Istanbul and Byzantium (upper right), and across the Bosporus Strait to Chrysopolis (top center) where Constantine defeated Licinius in September 324.

Licinius fled east to Nicomedia. There, he was persuaded by his wife Constantia that further resistance was useless, and was heartened by her offer to seek leniency for him. On the following day, Constantia went to the camp of her brother, and offered the surrender and abdication of both Licinius and Martinianus if their lives would be spared. Constantine accepted, and later in the day received the purple garments from the deposed rulers, and was saluted by them as the sole Augustus over the Roman Empire. Constantine sent Licinius to Thessalonica and Martinianus to Cappadocia under guard for forced retirements. Through suspicion of treasonable actions and at the request of the army command, both were put to death the following year to save the state from more war.[29]

By means of the defeat of Licinius, Constantine and the Christian religion had finally triumphed in the Roman world. Commenting on the victory of his beloved Christian emperor a few years later, Eusebius of Caesarea exulted:

> And now with the impious defeated and the gloomy cloud of tyrannic power dispersed, the sun once more shone brightly. Each separate portion of the Roman domain was blended with the rest; the eastern regions were united with those of the west, and the whole body of the Roman Empire was graced as it were at its head in the person of a single and supreme ruler, whose sole authority pervaded the whole. Now too the bright rays of the light of godliness gladdened the days of those who had earlier been sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. Past sorrows were no more remembered, for all united in celebrating the praises of the victorious princeps, and avowed their recognition of his preserver as the only true God.[30]

In the autumn following his triumph, Constantine took steps to ensconce his family as the ruling dynasty over the Roman Empire. He added the term VICTOR to the front of his official titulature: VICTOR CONSTANTINUS MAXIMUS AUGUSTUS ("The Victor Constantine the Greatest Augustus") to mark his military victories over his various rivals and his political supremacy in the state. He endowed his mother Helena and his wife Fausta with the title of AUGUSTA, and minted coins for them displaying their images and new title. He had already elevated Crispus, his only son by Minervina, and Constantine II, his first son by Fausta, to the rank of Caesar in early 317. He named Constantius II, his second son by Fausta, a Caesar as well on 8 November 324, establishing in theory a Constantinian dynastic tetrarchy. In reality, Constantine was the only Augustus, and usually resided in and governed the eastern provinces. His grown son Crispus was the only active Caesar, and normally lived in and ruled the western regions. The two younger Caesars were only eight and seven years old in 324, and were still living with their parents. Whatever embarrassment Fausta had experienced earlier in the marriage regarding her tardiness to produce heirs had long since disappeared. She had given Constantine four children, and was probably pregnant with a fifth child by this time. The success of Fausta in providing offspring was celebrated by the title MAXIMA AUGUSTA in the obverse inscription, and by the image of the empress holding two sons in her arms on the reverse motif of the coins minted for her. Probably on the same day that he promoted Constantius II to the rank of Caesar, Constantine marked out the

perimeter of an imperial residence for himself at the site of Byzantium beneath the Bosporus Strait. Over the next six years, he would have the small old Greek colony expanded into a large new Christian capital for the east—the city of Constantinople.[31]

At the same time, Constantine took actions to establish his faith as the favored religion of the Roman world. At the end of the civil war, he issued a letter to the inhabitants of the eastern provinces clearly expressing his belief in the Christian Deity and his support for the Catholic Church. Eusebius recorded the text of the letter sent to Palestine in his *Vita Constantini*.[32] In the first part of the letter the emperor offered an assessment of recent events in words reminiscent of Lactantius:

> Victor Constantine, the Greatest Augustus, to the inhabitants of the Province of Palestine. To all who entertain just and sound sentiments regarding the nature of the Supreme Being, it has long been most clearly evident, and beyond the possibility of doubt, how vast a difference there has always been between those who maintain a careful observance of the hallowed duties of the Christian religion, and those who treat this religion with hostility or contempt. Yet at this present time, we may see by even more manifest proofs, and by still more decisive instances, how unreasonable it is to question this truth, and how mighty is the power of the Highest God. On the one hand, it appears that those who faithfully observe his holy laws, and shrink from the transgression of his commandments are rewarded with abundant blessings, and are endowed with reasonable hope and ample power for the accomplishment of their undertakings. On the other hand, those who have cherished impious sentiments have experienced consequences corresponding to their evil choice….
>
> For certainly anyone who will mentally retrace the course of events from the earliest period down to the present time, and will reflect on what has occurred in past ages, will find that all who have made justice and probity the basis of their conduct not only have taken their undertakings to a successful issue, but also have gathered, as it were, a store of sweet fruit as the produce from this pleasant root. Again, anyone who observes the career of those who have been bold in the practice of oppression or injustice, and have either directed their senseless fury against God himself, or have conceived no kindly feelings towards their fellow men, but have dared to afflict them with exile, disgrace, confiscation, massacre, or other miseries of like kind…will find that such men have received a recompense proportioned to their crimes….
>
> For whoever have addressed themselves with integrity of purpose to any course of action, keeping the fear of God continually before their thoughts, and preserving an unwavering faith in him, without allowing present fears or dangers to outweigh their hope of future blessings, such persons—though for a season they may have experienced painful trials—have borne their afflictions lightly, being supported by the belief of greater rewards in store for them; and their character has acquired a brighter luster in proportion to the severity of their past sufferings. On the

other hand, whoever have either dishonorably slighted the principles of justice, or refused to acknowledge the Supreme God,…such men, I say, have many a time seen their armies slaughtered, have many a time been put to flight, and have had their warlike preparations end in total ruin and defeat.

From the causes I have described, grievous wars arose, and destructive devastations resulted…. The authors of these impieties have either met a disastrous death of extreme suffering, or have dragged out an ignominious existence,…thus receiving as it were a measure of punishment proportioned to the heinousness of their crimes….

*And with such a mass of impiety oppressing the human race, and with the commonwealth in danger of being utterly destroyed,…*and thus needing powerful and effectual aid, what was the relief, *what was the remedy which the Divinity devised for these evils?* (And by Divinity is meant the One who is alone and truly God, the possessor of almighty and eternal power; and surely it cannot be deemed arrogance in one who has received benefits from God, to acknowledge them in the loftiest terms of praise.) *I myself, therefore, was the instrument whose services He chose, and esteemed suited for the accomplishment of his will.* Thus, beginning at the remote Britannic Ocean,…*with the aid of divine power I banished and utterly removed every form of evil which prevailed, in the hope that humanity, enlightened through my instrumentality, might be recalled to a due observance of the holy laws of God, and at the same time our most blessed faith might prosper under the guidance of his almighty hand...*

Believing, therefore, that *this most excellent service had been confided to me as a special gift,* I proceeded as far as the regions of the East, which, being under the pressure of severer calamities, seemed to demand more effectual remedies at my hands. At the same time I am most certainly persuaded that I myself owe my life, my every breath, in short, my very inmost and secret thoughts, entirely to the favor of the Supreme God. Now I am well aware that they who are sincere in the pursuit of the heavenly hope, and have fixed this hope upon heaven itself as the peculiar and predominant principle of their lives, have no need to depend upon human favor, but rather have enjoyed higher honors in proportion as they have separated themselves from the inferior and evil things of this earthly life. Nevertheless, I deem it incumbent on me to quickly and most completely remove from all such persons the hard necessities laid upon them for a season, and the unjust inflictions under which they have suffered…. For it would be strange indeed if the fortitude and constancy of soul displayed by such men which were fully apparent during the reign of those whose first object it was to persecute them on account of their character should not appear more bright and blessed under the administration of a prince who is *the servant of God.*[33]

In the central core of the missive, Constantine ordered the restoration of anything which Christians as individuals or the Church as a body had lost in the recent persecution in

instructions which were very explicit and most forceful. All Christians, who had been exiled and deprived of their goods, were to be returned to their homes and possessions. Clergy, who had been enrolled in city councils and burdened with public *munera,* were to have their exemptions restored. Any laity, who had lost their legal status and been forced to work in state mines or on public works, were to regain their freedom and stations in life. Soldiers, who had been dismissed from service, were to be restored to their ranks or given the choice of honorable discharges. The property of martyrs was to be given to their next of kin, or deeded to their local churches. The corporate property of churches, including the tombs of martyrs and cemeteries, were to be restored immediately whether they were in the possession of private individuals or of the state treasury:

> all things whatsoever which shall appear righteously to belong to the churches, whether the property consist of houses, or fields and gardens, or whatever the nature of these may be, shall be restored with full value and integrity, and undiminished right of possession.[34]

In the conclusion to this "Edict of Restitution"—as it should probably be called—the zealous emperor returned to the lessons of recent history, and exhorted his subjects to learn from them and therefore worship the one true Divinity:

> And now, since it appears by the clearest and most convincing evidence that the miseries which until recently oppressed the entire human race have at last been banished from every part of the world through the power of the Almighty God and by the counsel and aid which he has been pleased on numerous occasions to administer through our agency, it remains for all both individually and unitedly to observe and to consider seriously how great are this power and how efficacious are this grace, which have annihilated and thoroughly destroyed this generation, as I may call them, of most wicked and evil men; have restored joy to the good, and have diffused it over all regions; and have guaranteed the fullest authority both to honor the divine law as it should be honored with all reverence, and to pay due observance to those who have dedicated themselves to the service of this law….
>
> Let this ordinance be published in our Eastern provinces.[35]

Constantine followed this letter with specific actions clearly indicating that he henceforth expected Christianity to be accepted as the official religion of the Roman Empire. From the end of the civil war, he favored his cobelievers in appointments to governmental positions. Eusebius attested that the majority of the governors he thereafter sent out to administer the provinces were Christian; and that they were given freedom "to act consistently with their confession"—presumably meaning that they were allowed to offer prayers to the Christian God during official functions. Further, the emperor explicitly ordered all imperial officials to refrain from offering pagan sacrifices to the old gods.[36] During the winter of 324–25, he sent letters to provincial governors and Catholic bishops ordering them to cooperate in erecting churches in their areas to encourage the worship of

the true Deity. Eusebius, who received one of these missives as the metropolitan bishop of Palestine, proudly included it in his *Life of Constantine:*

> Victor Constantine, the Greatest Augustus, to Eusebius. In so far as the unholy and willful rule of tyranny has persecuted the servants of our Savior until this present time, I believe and have fully satisfied myself, best beloved brother, that the buildings which belong to all the churches have either become ruinous through actual neglect, or have received inadequate attention out of fear of the violence of the times.
>
> Yet, now that liberty has been restored, and that dragon driven from the administration of public affairs by the providence of the Supreme God and by our agency, we trust that all can see the efficacy of divine power, and…will now acknowledge the true Deity and adopt in the future that course of life which is in accord with truth and rectitude. Thus, with respect to the churches over which you yourself preside, as well as those ruled by bishops, presbyters, and deacons whom you know, admonish all to be zealous in their attention to the edifices of the churches, and either to repair or enlarge those which now exist, or…erect new ones.
>
> We also empower you, and the others through you, to demand what is needed for this work, both from the provincial governors and from the Praetorian Prefect. For they have received instructions to be most diligent in obedience to the commands of your holiness. May God preserve you, beloved brother.[37]

At the same time that he embarked on a massive church-building program, Constantine issued a law to the people of the empire enjoining them to desist from performing rituals in honor of false gods. Eusebius reported that it prohibited anyone "to erect images, or to practice divination and other false and foolish acts, or to offer sacrifice in any way." Although this law has not survived independently, subsequent actions by Constantine, and references to such a prohibition in a later law issued by his sons and in the works of other Church historians appear to support the claim of Eusebius.[38] In the flush of the victory over Licinius and the forces of paganism, such a law against the discredited rituals of the old religions must have seemed appropriate. However, the law seems to have incited disturbances in some eastern regions—Christians attacking the temples and pagans protesting the prohibition. Although Constantine was a sincere Christian, with a missionary zeal to lead his subjects to his faith, he was also a tolerant individual who believed that religious choice was personal, and a pragmatic politician who judged that civil disturbances were harmful. So, after considering the situation for several months, he retreated a little from a complete prohibition of paganism. In the spring of 325, he issued another letter to the eastern provinces defining and justifying his official religious policy for the future. Eusebius, who read a copy of it in Palestine, included the text of this "Edict on Religion" in his *Vita Constantini.*[39]

In the first part of the letter, Constantine reflected that "the appointed laws of nature…[and]…the just perceptions of sound reason…lead to the knowledge of God." However, he indicated that many people do not choose to live in accord with nature and reason; but that the beauty of the virtue of those who do believe in the true Deity is

illuminated by the folly of the vice of those who do not believe and suffer judgment for their perversity. He again reviewed recent imperial history in Lactantian terms, criticizing the evil emperors who had "unsheathed the sword which was ordained for the punishment of crime against those whose holiness was beyond reproach." He declared that the persecution of the Christian Church had been utterly wrong, that it had disrupted imperial peace and engendered civil strife, and that the savage perpetrators of that dreadful guilt had all experienced miserable ends.[40]

In the center of the missive, the emperor addressed a prayer to the Christian God, announcing his belief that he was playing a special role in the divine dispensation, and expressing his desire that he was bringing religious peace to the Roman Empire:

> And now I beseech you, most mighty God, to be merciful and gracious to your eastern provinces, to your people in these regions, worn down as they are by protracted miseries; and to grant them healing through *your servant*. It is not without cause, O holy God, that I offer this prayer to you, the Lord of all. Under your guidance I have undertaken and accomplished blessed actions: *preceded by your sacred sign, I have led a victorious army everywhere; and on each occasion of public danger, I follow the same symbol of your virtue while advancing to meet the foe.* Therefore, I have dedicated my soul to you duly attempered by love and fear. *For I truly love your name, and I reverence the power which you have shown me with many proofs to the increase of my steadfast faith. I hasten now to devote all of my powers to the restoration of your most holy house,* which those profane and impious men have defiled by the contamination of violence.
>
> My own desire for the common good of the world and for the advantage of all humanity is that your people may enjoy a life of peace and undisturbed concord. Let those, therefore, who still delight in error be made welcome to the same degree of peace and tranquillity which they who believe enjoy. For it could happen that a restoration of equal privileges to all might induce them to take the straight path. Let no one molest any other person, but let everyone do as his soul desires. Truly let men of sound judgment know that only those people whom you have called to a reliance on your holy laws can live a life of holiness and purity. *Concerning those who hold themselves aloof from us, let them have, if they please, their groves of falsehood; we have the glorious edifice of your truth, which you have given us as our native home.* We pray, however, that they too may receive the same blessing, and thus experience that heartfelt joy which unity of sentiment inspires.[41]

In the final part of the letter, Constantine reflected again that the system of the universe and the order within nature reveal the wondrous ways and works of the Almighty. He lamented that humanity had fallen into the evil errors of false worship, but praised God for sending "a pure light" in the person of his Son to offer witness to the path of truth. He expressed his hope that the "healing virtue" contained in "the precepts of the divine doctrine" might be placed within the reach of all through "the blessing of peace" which

his victory had brought to the people of the Roman world. Yet, the emperor recognized that religious belief was ultimately a matter of personal choice; and he did not want to return to the coercive measures of his cruel predecessors. Thus, he concluded his remarks by declaring:

> Let no one use that to the detriment of another which he may himself have received on conviction of its truth; but let everyone, if possible, apply what he has understood and known to the benefit of his neighbor; if otherwise, let him relinquish the attempt. For it is one thing voluntarily to undertake the contest for immortality, another to compel others to do so from fear of punishment.
>
> These are my words, and I have enlarged on these topics more than my usual clemency would have dictated, because I was unwilling to dissemble or to be false to the true faith; and also, since I understand that there are some who say that the rituals of the pagan temples, and the power of darkness, have been entirely removed. Indeed, I would have earnestly recommended such a removal to all people if it were not for that rebellious spirit of those wicked errors which still obstinately remains fixed in the minds of some so as to discourage the hope of any general restoration of humanity to the ways of truth.[42]

Constantine followed the religious policy enunciated in this edict for the last twelve years of his reign: he would openly and actively propagate Christianity while he barely and reluctantly tolerated paganism. For him, the Christian Church was the "most holy house" of the one true Deity while the pagan temples were the "groves of falsehood" of fallen humanity. The light of truth was taught in the former while the darkness of error was practiced in the latter. Both the order in the natural world and the course of recent history verified his faith in "the precepts of the divine doctrine." Since he believed that the true God had put him in power and led him to victory, he felt a deep obligation to protect the Church and propagate the religion in which the Almighty was worshiped. However, his studies in Pauline theology and his experiences in imperial politics had made him aware of the lack of perfection in humanity and of the value of peace in society. He realized that some of his subjects would never have the wisdom to undertake "the contest for immortality"; and that efforts to compel them would cause civil disorder. He had waged wars as a proponent of toleration against the perpetrators of persecution, and had been hailed as a "good emperor" for rejecting their policy of religious coercion. Thus, after the initial euphoria of his victory had passed, Constantine settled upon a religious policy which fulfilled the needs of his personal beliefs and of his public duties. He established Christianity as the favored religion within the Roman Empire, and employed imperial resources to promote the Catholic Church in Roman society; yet, he allowed the less offensive forms of pagan practices to continue in the "peace and tranquillity" of the new era. He hoped in this way to lessen the popularity of paganism, and to heighten the attraction of Christianity. Constantine's profound piety and pragmatic politics resulted in a religious policy which largely achieved his goals by the end of his reign.[43]

The note of sad resignation in Constantine's "Edict on Religion" may have been caused by more than the reluctance of some pagans to accept the Christian faith, but also

by his realization that there were serious doctrinal conflicts in the eastern Church. For during the winter of 324–25 just when he was trying to establish Christianity as the official religion of the Roman world, the emperor discovered that his eastern brethren were deeply divided over important issues of theological belief and liturgical practice—and that his intervention would be necessary to help mend the divisions.

Constantine may have heard something of the theological conflict before the civil war; however, it was during his victory celebrations at Nicomedia in the autumn and during a tour of his new domains over the winter that he learned how the controversy had begun and how divisive it had become. In fact, he became so disturbed about it while he was traveling through his eastern provinces with the intention of visiting Egypt that he halted his journey at Antioch in December, initiated efforts to heal it, and returned to Nicomedia.[44]

The conflict had started in Alexandria during the "cold war" era, and centered on the precise relationship of Christ the Son to God the Father. The New Testament had indicated clearly that Jesus was the promised Messiah of Old Testament prophecies, and in some special sense the Son and Word of God who communicated the perfect revelation of divine will to humanity. However, some texts in the Bible emphasized the humanity of Christ and his subordination to the Father (Mt 24:36: "But as for that day and hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, no one but the Father alone"); while others emphasized the divinity of Christ and his equality with the Father (Jn 10:30: "The Father and I are one"). Church theologians had struggled for centuries to maintain the Old Testament doctrine of a single God while making room for the New Testament teachings about the Son and the Holy Spirit in the Christian definition of the Deity. The Church in the Latin west, following the lead of Tertullian, had settled on the concept of a Triune God of one substance and three persons, emphasizing the unity and equality of the persons within the Trinity. The Church in the Greek east had split over this issue, with some leaders largely in agreement with the western definition; but others following the lead of Origen, emphasizing the unique nature of the Father, and the separate and subordinate qualities of the Son and the Spirit. Lucian of Antioch, a celebrated but controversial Christian teacher/martyr in the early fourth century—along with several of his influential students—had taken the speculations of Origen to the extreme, and seemed to be denigrating the status of Christ the Son in order to preserve the unique quality of God the Father. Such was the case with Arius, the man whose name defined the theological controversy which now engulfed the eastern church—*Arianism*. Arius was a senior presbyter serving the Baucalis parish in a rural district of Alexandria during the reign of Licinius. He was a tall, ascetic, and eloquent preacher, who delighted in using Platonic speculation in his biblical homilies and in receiving passionate adoration from his faithful hearers. Starting from Platonic premises, he taught that God was the eternal and indivisible monad, and that once He was alone and not a Father. Wishing to create the cosmos, God made a Son out of nothing, and endowed him with his Word through whom the created order came into being. The Son, therefore, was neither co-eternal nor consubstantial with the Father: he was both posterior in time to, and different in essence from, the Father. The Father was unoriginated and without a beginning, but the Son was originated and with a beginning. Although anterior to other creatures, the Son was still a creature, and, like them, subject to change. The Son was thus both inferior to God in character, and different from Him in essence (Greek οὐσία, Latin *substantia*). Quite

taken with his own clever thinking, Arius unwisely published his theories in popular verse form—the infamous *Thalia*—so that the masses could better appreciate and apprehend his views. The controversial teachings of Arius came to the attention of Alexander, the Bishop of Alexandria (312–28), *ca.* 318. The bishop called his clergy together, and questioned them about their beliefs on the relationship of Christ the Son to God the Father. The majority expressed the view that Christ was co-eternal with and equal to God the Father. Arius and a few supporters propounded the view that Christ was posterior and subordinate to God the Father. Alexander sided with the former, and ordered Arius to repent from his false teaching. When the obstinate priest refused, the bishop called a synod of the Egyptian and Libyan churches over which he presided, and had Arius and his supporters excommunicated and their views anathematized. Refusing to back down, Arius wrote to friends in the eastern church, and traveled from Egypt to Bithynia seeking support. He received sympathetic hearings from Eusebius of Caesarea, the famous Church historian and intellectual heir of Origen, and from Eusebius of Nicomedia, a fellow student of Lucian and the episcopal advisor of Licinius. They persuaded Arius to soften some of his more inflammatory language and extreme positions—to substitute the word "begotten" for "created" or "made" when referring to the generation of the Son, to situate that generation before time, and to drop the idea of mutability, elevating the Son to a higher position than he had earlier given him, but still leaving Christ the Son different in essence and inferior in status to God the Father. Eusebius of Nicomedia wrote letters to several bishops, affirming the orthodoxy of Arius and pressuring Alexander to restore him to communion. Alexander did not trust Arius, and did not like outside interference in the affairs of his see. So, sometime in 319 the Alexandrian bishop responded with a circular letter to bishops around the empire, explaining how "lawless and anti-Christian men" had recently begun teaching "apostasy" in his diocese, and how Eusebius of Nicomedia had backed these "apostates" with "commendatory letters" which were helping to spread the dangerous and heretical ideas. He identified Arius and those who supported his teachings, and castigated the more radical propositions seen in the *Thalia*. He went on to ask:

> "Who has ever heard such blasphemies, or…hearing them, is not horror-struck…? Who is there who hears John saying, 'In the beginning was the Word,' who does not condemn those who say 'There was a period when the Word was not'? Or who is there upon hearing in the Gospel of 'the only-begotten Son,' and that 'all things were made by him,' who will not abhor those who say that the Son is one of the things made? How can he be one of the things which were made by himself? Or how can he be the only-begotten, if he is reckoned among created things…? Or how is he unlike the Father's essence, who is 'his perfect image,' and 'the brightness of his glory,' and says: 'He who has seen me, has seen the Father? Again, how, if the Son is the Word and Wisdom of God, was there a period when he did not exist? for that is equivalent to their saying that God was once destitute both of Word and of Wisdom. How can he be mutable and susceptible of change, who says of himself: 'I am in the Father, and the Father is in me'; and 'I and the Father are one.'"

After quoting more scriptures against Arian speculations, he pointed out how he and nearly a hundred Egyptian and Libyan bishops had met in council, and condemned the teachings of Arius, and "publicly repudiated and anathematized" him and his followers. He concluded his missive by calling upon all upright Christians "to turn away from all those who speak or entertain a thought against Christ as if from those who are resisting God and are the destroyers of the souls of men." Eusebius of Nicomedia then convened a Bithynian synod in the following year. It approved the modified teachings of Arius, and communicated its decisions to Bishop Alexander. Arius and his Egyptian supporters likewise wrote a letter to their metropolitan, defending their theology, but still positing that God was the "Monad before all things," and that "He was therefore also before the Son"; and that there were "three separate subsistences" within the divine Christian Trinity. In 321, Eusebius of Nicomedia led Arius and his friends to Palestine, and got Eusebius of Caesarea to call a council of the bishops in his area. This council supported the moderate subordinationist positions which Arius had been expounding during his travels, and recommended that Arius submit to his bishop, and that Alexander readmit his presbyter. About this time, Licinius began his persecution against the Christians of the east, and his ban on episcopal travel prevented the bishops from dealing with the conflict through councils. The Licinian persecution of the eastern church and the "holy war" between the two Augusti occupied the attention of most Christians during the next three years. Yet, the theological controversy about the Deity continued to simmer beneath the surface of those more dramatic events. Arius went back to Alexandria, and attempted to gain support among the common people for his teachings; while Alexander sent letters out across the empire, and tried to garner backing from notable bishops for his positions. After the civil war came to an end, and peace was restored again, pamphlet campaigns and public commotions erupted over the issue in eastern cities. It was the chaotic division in the Christian Church, and the cruel derision by the pagan populace that it inspired, which so disturbed Constantine on his imperial tour in late 324.[45]

Thus, the emperor halted his imperial tour at Antioch, composed a long and eirenic letter to Alexander and Arius, and commissioned his Christian advisor Ossius of Cordova to take the missive to Alexandria and see if he could arbitrate the theological conflict at its source. Ossius seems to have carried out his mission in the early months of the year 325. Although Constantine probably understood the seriousness of the theological dispute from his readings in Lactantius and from his discussions with Ossius, he attempted to minimize the significance of the dissension and to play the role of a peacemaker in his epistle. He informed the Egyptian primate and his presbyter that he had undertaken his recent crusade in order to restore political stability to the empire, and to bring religious unity to the world. He had achieved the one with arms, and was trying to accomplish the other with reason. He confided, however, that he was deeply wounded to find that they had broken communion with each other and had divided the Church over an insignificant point of doctrine. He expressed the hope that they would allow him as a fellow servant of God and minister of peace to heal their conflict. He pointed out that it was unbecoming for ministers of the Supreme God to debate in public on abstruse issues that the feebleness of human faculties could never fully understand; he argued, rather, that it was more important for them to maintain a spirit of concord and a unity of fellowship in service to "our great God and common Savior." He urged them to resume a united judgment of faith and mutual feelings of friendship. If they were to do so, he assured

them that they would restore quiet days, untroubled nights, and a tranquil life to their emperor, and would facilitate the completion of the task that the providence of God had entrusted to him. Ossius delivered Constantine's missive to the disputants, but the imperial letter did not heal the divisions in the Egyptian church—the hostile parties were too entrenched in their positions to be swayed by the wise counsel within it. Constantine and Ossius had probably expected this, and seem to have developed another plan for dealing with the dispute. The Christian emperor and his Catholic advisor came to this conflict with positions closer to Bishop Alexander than to Arius—that Christ shared fully in the divine essence, and that presbyters should obey their ecclesiastical superiors; and both were willing to employ imperial pressure to obtain Church unity for those positions. Thus, when Constantine's epistle failed to restore fraternal concord in Alexandria, Ossius took actions to prepare for a great council of the eastern Church which he and the emperor seem to have agreed would be needed to deal with this theological controversy—it was scheduled to be held at Ancyra in central Anatolia in the spring. As the legate of Constantine, he presided over a synod in Alexandria, sided with Alexander against Arius, and forced a schismatic bishop named Colluthus to return to the rank of a priest and reestablish allegiance to the primate. However, he found that the Egyptian church was divided over other issues as well—a Melitian Schism similar to African Donatism, and a scheduling dispute over the Easter festival. Ossius dispatched a report of his findings to the emperor, who was back in Nicomedia by late February. Invitations were sent out to the leaders of the eastern Church to convene at Ancyra in the spring. Ossius then returned to Antioch where he had scheduled a regional synod to set the affairs of that church in order and to set the stage for the Ancyra council. Philogonius, the former Bishop of Antioch and a supporter of Alexander, had died in December while Constantine and Ossius were visiting the city. They wanted to keep a "sound" man in that important episcopal see. Therefore, Ossius had summoned bishops from Cappadocia and Syria in the north to Palestine and Arabia in the south to meet him in Antioch on his return from Alexandria. He helped get Eustathius of Beroea, a firm opponent of Arian views, elected as the Bishop of Antioch. The conservative majority then composed a detailed statement of faith, which advocated the positions of Alexander, and anathematized those of Arius. Ossius and fifty-five bishops signed the credal statement, which they represented as being in accord with the teachings of Scripture, the Apostles, and the Fathers of the Church. Only three bishops—Theodotus of Laodicea, Narcissus of Neronias, and Eusebius of Caesarea—refused to sign the confession of faith and condemnation of Arianism. They were provisionally excommunicated, and told to appear at Ancyra where they would be given another chance to prove their orthodoxy at the "great and holy council." Although Ossius had not mended the Egyptian conflict, his mission had laid a foundation for unifying the Church—he had supported Alexander in Alexandria and Antioch, he had gotten an anti-Arian creed drafted and accepted by a large number of eastern bishops; and he had put Arian sympathizers on notice that their views were no longer acceptable.[46]

Even before Ossius had completed his work in Antioch, Constantine had finished reading his report in Nicomedia. The continuing theological conflict bothered him; yet, so too did the fact that some eastern churches were following a Jewish instead of the Roman manner of scheduling Easter, and were observing this most important Christian festival at a different time than the majority of their brethren. He had concluded that the definition

of the Deity and the dating of Easter were issues that deserved consideration by the whole episcopate; and he had decided to widen the scope and change the venue for the upcoming "great and holy council." As the ecclesiastical historian Socrates later commented: "When the emperor thus beheld the Church agitated on account of both these causes, he convoked a General Council, summoning all the bishops by letter to meet him at Nicaea in Bithynia." A copy of one of the imperial invitations sent out to eastern bishops in the early spring has survived, and indicates that the location of the council was changed because Nicaea was more accessible to western bishops, because the air of the new venue was most agreeable, and because Constantine wanted to participate in the meeting. The stated reasons were true; but there were unstated considerations as well. Besides the fact that Ancyra lay far inland on the hot Galatian plateau, it was also the episcopal see of the rabid anti-Arian bishop Marcellus—that site was not only inconvenient for western travelers, but was also inhospitable for Arian sympathizers. *Nicaea* (modern Iznik), on the other hand, was a pleasant lakeside town only a day's ride from the Marmora Sea coast up in the mountains of northern Bithynia. It was also within the metropolitan area of Eusebius of Nicomedia, and was the episcopal see of his Arian ally Theognis—the new site could thus be reached easily by western and eastern bishops, and seemed less biased against those tainted with Arianism. Yet, Constantine would host the clergy and Ossius would chair the synod in the imperial summer palace along the lakeshore of "Victory City" (Ills. 55 and 56). The astute emperor and his loyal advisor would thus be able to control the environment, and press for consensus at the Council of Nicaea.[47]



Ill. 55 The defensive walls and bastions of Roman/Byzantine Nicaea at the north-east end of town, with fertile fields in the foreground and the mountains of Bithynia in the distance.



Ill. 56 A view from the city walls of Nicaea over the site of the imperial summer palace along the lake shore at the west end of town where the Council of Nicaea was held in 325.

After Ossius had returned to Nicomedia in the spring, Constantine and his imperial entourage journeyed southwest to Nicaea, and prepared the palace for the upcoming council. The imperial audience hall was lined with seats which were organized according to the status of the episcopal leaders. The palace domestic quarters and nearby lakeshore hostels were sumptiously furnished to house the invited clergy. As the date for the council approached, Christian bishops—often accompanied by presbyters and deacons—arrived in the Bithynian city and settled in their appointed accommodations. Only a few Church leaders came from the west, where there was little interest in the eastern conflicts: Ossius from Spain; Caecilian from Africa; Marcus of Calabria, and the Roman presbyters Victor and Vincentius, representing Pope Sylvester, from Italy; Nicasius from Gaul; and Domnus from Pannonia. Most of the bishops and clergy came from the east, where the conflicts had been very divisive: among the anti-Arians, Alexander of Alexandria and his charismatic deacon Athanasius; Macarius of Jerusalem; Eustathius of Antioch; and Marcellus of Ancyra; among the pro-Arians, Eusebius of Nicomedia, Theognis of Nicaea, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Narcissus of Neronias. Besides these primary figures, there were scores of lesser-known bishops from small towns, who seemed more interested in meeting the imperial champion of their faith than in debating the divisive issues of the day. Since about 300 bishops—and three or four times that many associated clergy—descended upon Nicaea from across the empire and beyond its borders, this gathering has rightly been called the "First Ecumenical Council of the Church."[48]

The council began in early June with all the solemnity of a state occasion. After the bishops had taken their seats in the central hall of the palace, and some of the emperor's family members and Christian friends had entered the room, Constantine advanced to the front of the hall and sat upon a gilded chair. Eusebius of Nicomedia, the metropolitan of the area, offered a formal welcome to the emperor. Constantine then delivered what he must have sensed was one of the most important public addresses of his career. With a dignity of demeanor and an eloquence of expression, he told the bishops that seeing them all gathered together in his presence was the greatest blessing he had ever been granted. He rejoiced that the "power of God our Savior" had removed the "impious hostility of the tyrants" which had oppressed the Church. He lamented, however, that the Devil had inflicted Christianity with a danger greater than external wars—internal dissent among the faithful. He expressed the wish that he might see them "all united in one judgment and in that common spirit of peace and concord…which becomes those consecrated to the service of God." He assured them that if they embraced the principle of peace, they would be acting in a way most pleasing to the Supreme God, and they would be conferring a great favor upon him, their "fellow servant." He then took the petitions some bishops had given him earlier containing accusations against one another, and burned them in a fire, saying that "Christ enjoins him who is anxious to obtain forgiveness to forgive his brother." This speech set a tone for the council which was difficult to resist. The majority of its participants viewed Constantine as a gift from God—he was an agent of the divine anger against the persecutors of the Church, and he was a propagator of the divine Word to the pagans in the world. He was a champion of their religion and he was communicating in their parlance. Resisting a call to unity of doctrine and for amity of fellowship from such a divinely inspired ruler must have seemed utterly perverse.

After this speech, Ossius took control of the gathering, and acted as the official chair and directed the agenda of the council. The emperor, however, participated in the sessions, and used his imperial authority and personal charisma to aid Ossius in keeping the discussions as polite as possible.

The first item on the agenda was the theological controversy. Ossius and Constantine allowed all participants to air their views. Eusebius of Nicomedia seems to have read a statement containing Arian positions. This action elicited a negative clamor and clear disapproval from the majority in the hall. Eustathius of Antioch responded by declaiming an anti-Arian polemic, and the offensive document was torn up. He was followed by many speakers who adduced biblical texts to condemn the propositions of Arius. Constantine intervened often, and encouraged civility of expression and unity of sentiment to the episcopal leaders. At some point, Eusebius of Caesarea, who desired redemption from Antioch, was given a chance to confess his faith and clear his name. He calmly recited the baptismal creed of the Caesarean church, which stated that Jesus Christ was "the Word of God," "the only-begotten Son," "begotten of God the Father before all ages," and the One "by whom all things were made." It was entirely orthodox so far as it went; and the emperor grasped that it might serve as the basis for a compromise around which the disputants might unite. Constantine therefore endorsed the creed, and freed Eusebius from the taint of heresy. However, he then suggested that the addition of the word *homoousios* (Latin *consubstantialis*) would more clearly elucidate the unity and equality of Christ the Son with God the Father in a credal definition of the Christian Deity. Constantine was probably familiar with the concept "of one substance" or "of the

same essence" from his readings in Lactantian works and pagan philosophy, and from his discussions with Ossius and orthodox theologians. He sensed that such a term might offer a solution to the theological controversy in the Church. If he could persuade the renowned Church historian and biblical commentator of Caesarea to accept that word, he felt that he had a formula which could unite the majority of episcopal leaders in a circle of consensus, and leave the minority of Arian radicals out in a wilderness of heresy. Eusebius, who respected the pious emperor and his religious program, did not particularly like the homoousian term; but he knew that some important western and eastern theologians had recently employed it in their attempts to explain the complex nature and economy of the Christian God. Therefore, he courteously agreed to the suggestion of Constantine. The political goals of the Christian emperor and the pragmatic politics of the episcopal scholar merged at this moment to pave the way for a theological compromise. Ossius swiftly responded to this felicitous opportunity, and appointed a committee to compose a statement of faith based upon baptismal creeds, but laced with anti-Arian phrases. In a few days, the statement which has come to be known as the *Nicene Creed* was brought forth by the committee, and was read to the conclave of bishops:

> We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father, that is of the substance of the Father; God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten not made, consubstantial *(homoousios)* with the Father; by whom all things were made, both which are in heaven and on earth; who for the sake of us men, and on account of our salvation, descended, became incarnate, and was made man, suffered and arose again on the third day, and ascended into the heavens, and will come again to judge the living and the dead. [We believe] also in the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes those who say "There was a time when he was not," and "He did not exist before he was begotten," and "He was made of nothing," and assert that "He is of other substance or essence than the Father," or that the Son of God is created, or mutable, or susceptible of change.

Ossius and Constantine indicated that they expected all the bishops present to accept and sign this statement as the official creed of the Catholic Church. The great majority of the episcopal participants were ready to do so immediately. However, a few of the supporters of Arius were happy neither with the homoousian term nor with the anti-Arian anathemas. Constantine therefore patiently took questions and rendered interpretations about the wording in the creed. The emperor had prepared himself carefully before the Nicaea gathering with readings in theology and in discussions with clergy on these issues, and was ready to debate the bishops as their equal on the central teachings of Christianity. He explained that the consubstantiality of the Father and Son need not be understood in a corporeal sense, but rather ought to be seen in a spiritual light, and that the common essence which they shared served to differentiate them from the created order. Eusebius of Caesarea and other moderate Arians accepted this gloss; and also acknowledged that the phrases anathematized in the creed did not appear in Scripture, and, in fact, were contradicted by many passages in the Old and New Testaments. When the great

Caesarean scholar agreed to accept the creed—and it was made clear that this was necessary for everyone wishing to retain the episcopal rank—Eusebius of Nicomedia, Theognis of Nicaea, and most of the other Arian dissenters soon gave in as well. The *magister officiorum* of the emperor carried the credal statement around the hall, and all of the bishops except two lifelong friends of Arius, Theonas of Marmarica and Secundus of Ptolemais, signed it. Arius and his allies were sent into exile, and forbidden to return to their sees so that they might not infect the faithful with their heretical views.

The second item on the agenda was the Easter conflict. As Christians had early broken from the Jewish practice of holding worship services on the Sabbath (Saturday) and had long held worship on Sunday instead, most of the churches in the Roman world had also given up using the Jewish calendar in favor of a Roman method of establishing the proper time for celebrating the passion and resurrection of their Lord. Constantine had been appalled to find that a few churches in the east were still employing a Jewish calculation for "the most holy day" of Christianity. As this issue was dear to the emperor, Ossius probably asked him to speak first on it. Constantine displayed an antipathy to the Jews which one might expect from a Roman patriot and a Christian zealot in the fourth century. He felt that since the Jews had failed to recognize the Messiah and had stained their hands with his blood, Christians should have "nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd," but employ Christian tradition instead. He argued that as the northern, western, southern, and most of the eastern churches had adopted the same way of determining the Easter feast, it was incumbent upon the few churches in Syria and Palestine who continued to follow the Jewish calculation to desist from this aberration and allow it "to be kept by all on one and the same day everywhere." The majority of the bishops at the council were on the side of the pious emperor on this issue, and there seems to have been little resistance to his plea for a uniform practice. The eastern custom of calculating Easter in the Jewish month of Nissan was rejected as improper, and the western practice of celebrating Easter on the first Sunday after the first full moon of the spring equinox was adopted as correct by a unanimous vote of the council.

The other items on the agenda were of less interest to Constantine. He continued to attend the sessions, however, and exhibited care for the bishops—conversing amiably with the clergy, and kissing the empty eyesockets of confessors. During the final sessions of the council, the bishops passed twenty canons concerning the proper order within the Church. The wide authority of the Bishops of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch over large regions of the western, southeastern, and eastern churches was confirmed, essentially recognizing them as the great Patriarchs of Christianity. Metropolitans were given supervisory power over the bishops in their provinces. A slow and careful process for advancement up the clerical ranks to the episcopal office was recommended, with at least three bishops required to consecrate, and the approval of the metropolitan to confirm, a bishop in office. Bishops, presbyters, and deacons were ordered to remain in the sees where they had been ordained, and not to move to other sees. Clergy excommunicated in one church were not to be accepted in another. Self-castration excluded a man from the clergy; and unmarried clergy were allowed to have only close female relatives living with them. Proper penances were set up for repentant Christians who had lapsed in recent persecutions; and lenient rules for integrating the schismatic Novatian clergy of Italy and Melitian clergy of Egypt were decreed to reunite these groups under the authority of their bishops.



Ill. 57 A stylized Orthodox icon depicting Constantine and the bishops in the imperial palace debating theology while the heretic Arius cowers below them at the Council of Nicaea.



Ill. 58 Coin of Constantine depicting the Christian Labarum piercing the great dragon and primeval serpent (the Devil) in a motif recalling biblical apocalyptic prophecies (327).

When the work of the Nicene Council was concluded in early July, the bishops sent letters to all the churches of Christendom communicating the actions of the assembly. The emperor followed up with letters of his own announcing that "unity of faith, sincerity of love, and community of feeling in regard to the worship of Almighty God" had been obtained in the council, and urged his Christian brethren to accept the actions from it as "indicative of the Divine Will."[49]

As Constantine traveled back toward Nicomedia to begin the celebration of his Vicennalia, he felt sure that he had overcome the Devil in the world and in the Church—the evil persecutor Licinius had been defeated in a "holy war," and the arch heretic Arius had been conquered in a "holy synod."

To illustrate his great triumphs, he ordered the erection of a large tableau above the entry portico at his new palace in Constantinople, which depicted him employing the Christian Labarum to pierce a great dragon whose head plunged downward to the Abyss. The tableau has not survived, but coins minted at the new capital represented it, and show that Constantine felt that he was fulfilling biblical apocalyptic prophecies about the destruction of the Devil and the inauguration of the reign of the Saints upon the earth (Ills. 57 and 58).[50]

VIII
THE DYNASTIC TRAGEDY AND HELENA'S PILGRIMAGE

> What shall I say about the decoration of the churches, which Constantine under the presence of his mother…adorned with gold, mosaics, and precious marble, whether it be the greater church or the Anastasis shrine, or the cross shrine, or the other holy places around Jerusalem?
>
> *Itinerarium Egeriae* 25.9

In July of 325, Constantine began the twentieth year of his reign with a successful conclusion to the Nicene Council and with a triumphal celebration of his Vicennalia festival. Yet, the year that started in triumph ended in tragedy with the enigmatic deaths of his son Crispus and his wife Fausta. Palace intrigue accomplished what his political enemies had failed to do: stain the record of one of the greatest rulers in Roman history. The dark events which blemished the end of the vicennial year, however, probably inspired Constantine's mother Helena and his mother-in-law Eutropia to carry out pilgrimages to the Holy Land (*ca.* 326–28) in order to make atonement for and to distract attention from Constantinian dynastic problems. Their devout exertions and ecclesiastical constructions in Palestine refurbished the sanctity of the dynasty and resulted in the creation of the "New Jerusalem" and the Christian Holy Land of the later Roman Empire.[1]

When the bishops had completed their agenda at Nicaea, Constantine journeyed back to Nicomedia where the festival initiating the twentieth year of his imperial reign was to be celebrated on 25 July 325. Public parades, chariot races, panegyrical orations, and sumptuous feasts were scheduled in honor of the emperor's *Vicennalia.* Because of his conviction in the power of the Christian Deity, and due to his delight in the unity of the Catholic clergy, Constantine invited the bishops to join him in the capital and to be his guests at the festival. The episcopal leaders accepted with alacrity and traveled en masse to Nicomedia. The emperor treated them to a splendid banquet where they reclined on couches around their generous host, and enjoyed a splendid feast inside the imperial palace. Eusebius of Caesarea described the scene as a vision foreshadowing the Messianic Banquet in the Kingdom of Christ. At the end of the festival, Constantine rewarded each of the bishops with gifts, and exhorted all of them to be diligent in avoiding strife and in maintaining peace.[2]

The emperor appears to have spent the remainder of the summer of 325 in or near Nicomedia; and then to have crossed the Bosporus, and to have spent the fall and winter months of 325–26 in or near Byzantium. During the late summer, he completed the

drafting and dispatching of letters concerning the decisions of the Council of Nicaea to all the churches in the empire. His delight in recounting the success of the council was temporarily interrupted when he learned that Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis of Nicaea were hosting some Arian heretics in their sees. They had signed the creed in order to keep their bishoprics, but had not accepted the anathemas against Arius. Constantine reacted angrily, and in late September or early October ordered that both bishops be deposed and sent into exile. He wrote to their churches and recommended that they elect “pure, orthodox, and beneficent bishops” to replace the pernicious troublemakers. This clear signal from the emperor that he was determined to enforce the Nicene settlement kept other Arian sympathizers in line for several years.[3]

When Constantine wrote his letter to the two Bithynian churches, he had already returned to the other side of the Bosporus. During the autumn and winter months, he oversaw the early phases of the transformation of Byzantium into Constantinople. He wanted his new capital in the east to rival the old capital in the west; therefore, many of the structures which characterized Rome were being constructed in Constantinople: an imperial palace and a senate house, an imperial forum and a triumphal column, public fountains and bathhouses, etc. Yet, there would be important differences. Whereas pagan temples decorated the core of Rome, Christian churches would adorn the center of Constantinople. Whereas the Colosseum and gladiatorial combats dominated old Rome, a hippodrome and its chariot races would distinguish new Rome. In fact, Constantine would not build a gladiatorial arena in his new city at all. As his knowledge of Christian ethics had expanded, he had come to the conclusion that the “bloody spectacles” which had characterized the pagan empire of the past were no longer appropriate in the emerging Christian empire of the future. Thus, he could not condone such brutal entertainment in Constantinople; and, with a renewed sense of missionary zeal after his success at Nicaea, he issued a constitution in the autumn of 325 outlawing gladiators, and condemning criminals committed formerly to serve in that profession henceforth to serve in the state mines instead.[4]

During the spring of 326, the emperor, his family and chief officials traveled toward Italy where the conclusion of the Vicennalia was to be celebrated in the old capital. Along the way, Constantine promulgated strict laws on sexual behavior in an apparent attempt to upgrade the moral fiber of Roman society. Unlike many of his imperial predecessors who had enjoyed sex with senators’ wives and slave girls, he believed that sexual relations belonged inside marriage, and that chastity should be observed outside of it. He had practiced temperance before his two marriages, and appears to have been loyal to both spouses. His natural inclinations were reinforced by his comprehension of Christian teachings. Six years earlier, the Christian emperor had nullified the Augustan penalties on unmarried men and women, permitting them to enjoy the same inheritance privileges as married people—thus recognizing the Pauline view that the celibate life was a higher calling for some of the faithful. When he reached northern Italy in April 326, Constantine expanded upon his efforts to upgrade Roman law with Christian ethics by issuing several new laws on sex, adultery, and marriage. The first one dealt very severely with abduction and rape. It ordered that men who abducted and raped girls were to be burned alive with no right of appeal against the sentence. Girls who willingly participated were to receive the same punishment. Girls who were unwilling, but did not cry out for help to family or neighbors in these situations, were to lose their inheritance. Nurses who

aided in abductions and rapes were to have molten lead poured into their mouths and throats. Parents who did not take action against abductors or rapists were to be deported. Slaves who reported these crimes were to receive Latin rights, and people with Latin rights who reported them were to be given full citizenship (1 April 326). The second one dealt with marriage between a tutor and his female ward. It decreed that if a girl reached marriageable age and wished to marry her tutor, the tutor had to prove that he had protected her chastity while she had been under his care before a marriage could be allowed. If he had violated her virginity, he could not marry her; he was to be deported and his property seized by the imperial fisc (4 April 326). The third one dealt with married men. It forbade them to keep concubines (*ca.* mid-April). The fourth one dealt with adultery. It limited charges of adultery to close relatives only—husbands, fathers and brothers, or uncles and cousins, thus preventing attacks by outsiders on married couples for inappropriate reasons (25 April 326). By these laws, Constantine seems to have hoped to discourage sexual impropriety and to upgrade marital sanctity in accord with Christian teachings.[5]

The western trip offered an opportunity for Constantine to meet with his first son, who was beginning the tenth year of his reign as the western Caesar. So, Crispus was summoned to come from Trier to join the imperial family in the north of Italy. Constantine undoubtedly wanted Crispus to join him for the festival to be staged in Rome celebrating the end of his Vicennalia and the beginning of his sons' Decennalia anniversaries as Diocletian had done for himself and his imperial colleagues back in 303. The reunion should have been a happy occasion, but something went terribly wrong. There had been no hint of problems in the relationship of Crispus and Constantine up to this time. The young man had been educated carefully in his father's court, he had served effectively as Caesar over his father's western domains, and he had commanded brilliantly as an admiral in his father's eastern crusade. Crispus was proving to be a worthy heir of his father and was poised to become Constantine's successor. His position, however, may have seemed dangerous to Fausta; and there had probably been problems in the relationship of Crispus and his stepmother for a long time. Crispus was the only child of Constantine's deceased first wife Minervina. His mother appears to have died early in his life, and he seems to have been raised by his grandmother Helena in the east. By the time Crispus had joined his father's court at Trier (*ca.* 313), he had entered his teens and had developed a deep loyalty to his doting grandmother. It is doubtful that Fausta had ever been able to win his affections; and the resentment Helena appears to have had for Fausta as the sister of "the other woman" Theodora who had replaced her as the wife of Constantius may have been passed on to Crispus. At best, Crispus and Fausta had presented a facade of public civility toward each other out of respect for Constantine. In the spring of 326, the resentment Fausta harbored toward Crispus as the son of her husband's first wife, and the fear she felt for him as an obstacle to her sons' future power seem to have overwhelmed her. Fausta must have noticed that there were too many similarities between the situation of her sister Theodora in 306 and her own situation in 326. When Constantius had died twenty years earlier, he had left behind one adult son from his first marriage with Helena, and three young boys from his second marriage to Theodora. Constantine, the older son, had assumed his imperial role, and—as long as his mother Helena was alive—had left his half-brothers from Theodora on the sidelines without power. By the time of his vicennial year, Constantine was close to the age at

which his father had died, and his grown son from his first wife was co-ruling with him as a Caesar and ready to succeed him as Augustus. Like his father, Constantine now also had three young sons from his second wife; but, as the chief emperor, he had been able to name two of them Caesars. However, the younger Constantine and Constantius were only ten and nine years old, and only nominal Caesars living with their parents in 326. Fausta seems to have loved and trusted Constantine; but her stepson was another matter. She appears to have developed a terrible fear that if Constantine were to die soon, history would repeat itself—Crispus could take all imperial power into his own hands, and push her and her sons to the sidelines as Constantine had done to her older sister Theodora and to her nephews. The possibility of such a scenario was intolerable to Fausta. She had been raised as the daughter and sister of emperors, she was the wife of the supreme Augustus, and she held the title of Augusta herself. Fausta believed that she and her children were born to the purple. She had the same desire for power and prestige which had consumed her father Maximian and her brother Maxentius. Yet, she had supported her husband Constantine against both of them in the past; and therefore her hopes that imperial power would continue in her



Ill. 59 Bronze coin with a bust of Crispus as the “Noble Caesar” carrying a shield with a Christogram on the obverse, and with an inscription and altar celebrating “Blessed Tranquillity” on the reverse (322–23).



Ill. 60 Bronze coin with a bust of Fausta as the "Maxima Augusta" on the obverse, and with the empress standing and holding Constantine II and Constantius II in her arms under the inscription "Salus Republicae" on the reverse (326).

bloodline now rested upon her sons by him. She could not let the possibilities of the early demise of her husband or a power move by her stepson stand in the way of the imperial succession of her sons. Irrational fears, craving for power, and maternal instincts thus induced Fausta to devise a plot to get rid of Crispus late in the spring of 326 (Ills. 59 and 60).[6]

Shortly after Crispus arrived at the imperial court in northern Italy, Fausta seems to have accused him of a breach of the moral legislation which Constantine had just issued. From the concise accounts in the *Epitome* of Victor, the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Philostorgius, and the *Historia Nova* of Zosimus, the charge appears to have been sexual advances toward, or attempted rape of, the empress. It is doubtful that the accusation was true; but Fausta—possibly backed by supporting testimony from some Roman nobles she had bribed—seems to have convinced her husband that such a heinous offense had been committed. Crispus was not able to convince his infuriated father that he was innocent, and Constantine swiftly ordered that his son be put to death. The condemned Caesar was escorted to Pola on the Adriatic coast, and forced to take poison—presumably a more merciful demise than being burned to death.[7]

The unexpected loss of Crispus must have been a severe blow to Constantine—both in the private emotional sense and in the public political sphere. He seems to have cared much for his son and may have seen much of himself reflected in him. He had been depending upon him to rule portions of the empire, and had been aided by him in the recent eastern war. Now, he was one son short of a Christian tetrarchy of heirs, and the three sons he had from Fausta were still too young to play a tangible role in his government for several years. Therefore, as he approached Rome to celebrate the end of his Vicennalia in July 326, Constantine must have come with a heavy heart and little joy. The latter would soon disappear completely as he learned of the guilt of Fausta in the

death of Crispus. His mother Helena had been living in her palace at the east end of Rome for some time, and had received word of the condemnation and death of her beloved grandson before Constantine reached the city. Helena had raised Crispus and knew in her heart that he was not capable of the offense for which he had been put to death. Reports that Fausta had been behind the accusation increased her suspicions of foul play. When Constantine entered the city, Helena approached him in mourning, and reproached him for the death of her grandson. With her imperial resources, she may have been able to gain some damnatory evidence that Fausta had deceived him; or, at the very least, she convinced Constantine that he had acted too swiftly and needed to investigate the case more deeply. He did so and soon confronted Fausta with her guilt in the condemnation and destruction of his dear and innocent son. One can only guess at the emotional torrent of words which then flowed between this passionate couple in the private quarters of the imperial palace atop the Palatine Hill in Rome. Constantine found himself caught between his love for Fausta and his guilt over Crispus, and no matter how much he adored her, he could not forgive her unconscionable action. He determined that he had to punish her with the same fate that she had arranged for Crispus; but out of respect for their long union and common efforts together, he sentenced her to the most merciful death possible. He ordered that she be taken into the *caldarium* or “hot bath” room of the palace *thermae* complex, and be confined in the heated water until she passed out and died of internal system collapse—as can happen if one drinks too much wine and stays too long in a modern jacuzzi. She expired quickly and was buried quietly.[8]



Ill. 61 A silver medallion depicting Constantine the Augustus holding a standard marked with the monogram of Christ—minted for the Vicennalia in Rome (326).

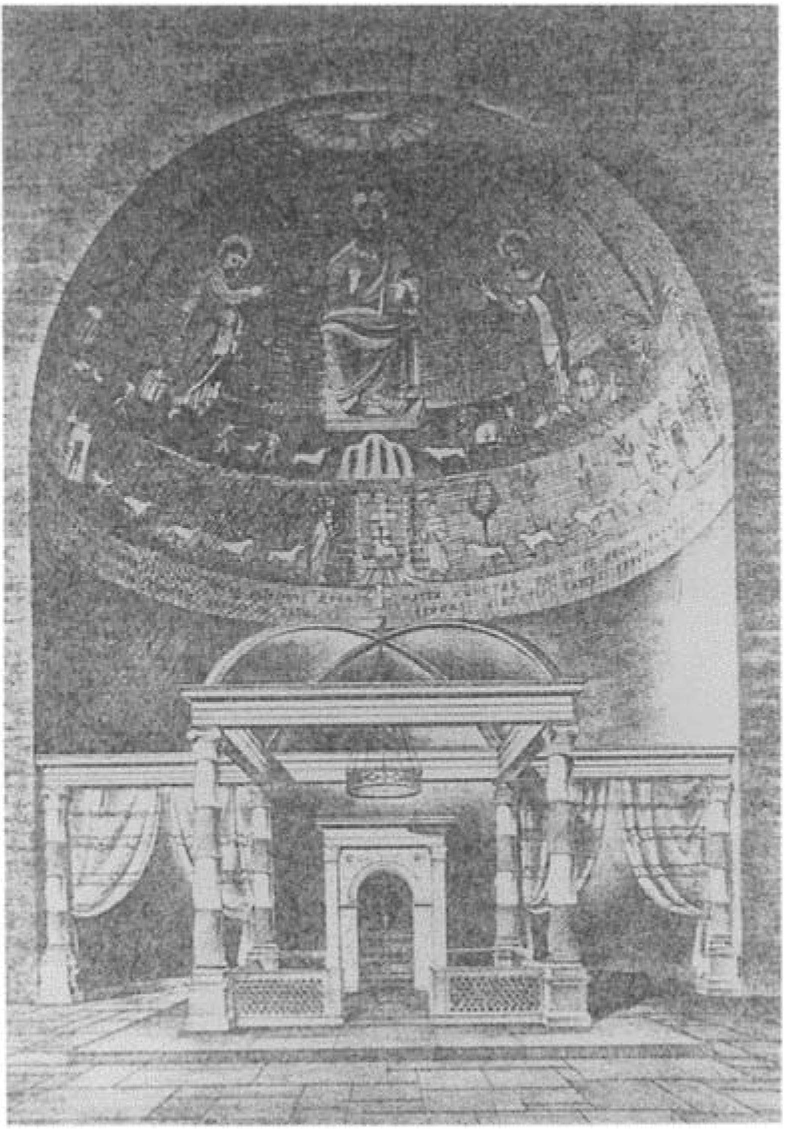
For the sake of the dynasty and the empire, some of the festive events planned for the imperial anniversary in the old capital undoubtedly were held as scheduled while the emperor visited Rome from 18 July to early August 326. Public parades, chariot races, and luxurious banquets were presented, and commemorative coins issued and selected taxes rebated as Constantine, his children, family, and entourage tried to project a positive image in a difficult situation (Ill. 61). However, the tragic deaths of Crispus and Fausta, and his sense of shame over them, undoubtedly affected Constantine deeply. He would never rehabilitate the memory of Crispus; if he had done so, he would have given himself a public reprimand for his grave mistake and he would have offered his other sons an unpleasant remembrance of their mother's horrible crime. Nor would he ever visit Italy or Rome again; if he had, he would have reminded himself too vividly of the awful deaths of his loved ones at the end of the vicennial year in the west.[9]

A pagan history and a papal biography provide hints about the grief of the emperor during the Roman Vicennalia and the initial efforts of Constantine and his family to recover from the dynastic tragedy. Zosimus, the hostile pagan historian of the fifth century, told a bogus story in his *Historia Nova* that a guilt-ridden Constantine canvassed numerous pagan priests for rituals by which he might expiate his sin in the deaths of Crispus and Fausta. Finding no consolation from them, he went to a Christian priest from Spain called Aegyptius who persuaded him that the redemptive doctrines of Christianity could cleanse him. The emperor then apostatized from the pagan cults and converted to the Christian faith, and began to avoid the ancestral cults and to attack divination rites. The story was patently untrue as Constantine had converted to Christianity nearly fourteen years earlier, had for a long time avoided pagan rituals, and had been legislating against divination for several years; it was concocted as a way to harm the reputations of Constantine and Christianity. Yet, there may be a kernel of truth imbedded within it. The "Spaniard named Aegyptius" may be a confused reference to Ossius of Cordova, who had long served as the emperor's Christian advisor, and had recently acted as his official legate to Egypt in the Arian Conflict. He was probably traveling with the imperial entourage on his way back from the east to his see in the west following the Council of Nicaea. In the aftermath of the dynastic tragedy, Constantine and his family certainly must have sought solace and counsel from this trustworthy Christian advisor. Ossius probably admonished them to strengthen their fidelity to the Christian God and to expand their patronage of the Catholic Church as ways of offering suitable atonement for the tragic deaths and of maintaining divine support for the imperial dynasty.[10] The emperor and his family appear to have taken the advice of Ossius, and to have reaffirmed their support for Christianity during and after the Vicennalia festival. The biography of Pope Sylvester in the *Liber Pontificalis* and archaeological work around Rome reveal some of the pious Christian actions which they carried out in the old capital during the summer of 326. From this data, it seems that work on the immense *Basilica Beato Petro Apostolo* had progressed far enough by this time that Pope Sylvester, Constantine, and his mother Helena were able to officially dedicate the Petrine Shrine at the western apsidal end of the church. They had arranged for the bones of the apostle to be wrapped in a purple cloth sewn with golden thread, lifted carefully from their original earthen grave, and deposited in a cavity in the wall of the shrine. And they placed in the center of the monument a gold cross engraved with black enamel letters commemorating that "Constantine the Augustus and Helena the Augusta adorn with gold this regal shrine which a basilican hall shining

with similar splendor surrounds." When the rest of the great edifice was completed a few years later, the triumphal arch in front of the transept was decorated with a mosaic showing Constantine and St. Peter presenting the basilica to Christ with an inscription reading "Because under your leadership the world rose up triumphant to the stars, Constantine the Victor founded this hall in honor of you" (Ill. 62). The *Liber Pontificalis* also recorded that Pope Sylvester baptized Constantia, the emperor's sister, and Constantina, his daughter, at the site where the famous female martyr St. Agnes had been buried to the north of Rome along the Via Nomentana. This event could only have occurred in 326. A few years later at the request of his daughter, Constantine would order the construction there of a great *Basilica Sanctae Martyris Agnae,* and an attached mausoleum in which his sister and daughter would be buried together. These circumstances appear to indicate that Constantia, who had lost her husband Licinius and her son Licinianus after the recent civil war, rallied to the support of her brother in his time of crisis, reaffirming her faith in Christianity and helping him raise his children upon the death of Fausta. The actions of Constantia were representative of the family as a whole. Constantine's mother and mother-in-law, his sisters and brothers, and his children all recognized the dangers inherent in the dynastic tragedy, and rallied round the emperor to protect their common imperial heritage.[11]

The public responsibilities of overseeing the empire and the paternal duties of raising his children soon gave Constantine an excuse to depart from Rome. After a short visit of only a couple weeks for the melancholy western Vicennalia, the emperor took leave of the old capital for the last time. With his sister Constantia at his side, and his children from Fausta in tow, he began the long journey back to the east. Subscriptions in ancient law codes reveal stops in Spoleto, Milan, Aquileia, Sirmium, Thessalonica, and Constantinople as the imperial entourage traveled back to Nicomedia from August 326 to July 327. Constantine undoubtedly began to train his younger sons for the role of emperor—guarding the frontiers, appointing key officials, and answering judicial appeals; and continued to raise them in the Christian faith as they traversed the empire.[12]

While Constantine was engaged in a prosaic trip back to his eastern capitals, his mother Helena was embarking upon a momentuous journey to the cradle of Christianity—her famous pilgrimage to the Holy Land. She visited important sites in the life and ministry of Jesus, bestowed imperial largess upon soldiers and citizens, and performed conspicious acts of Christian charity to the poor and downtrodden everywhere. She oversaw the building of churches which Constantine had commissioned, and ordered the construction of new basilicas on her own authority. At each of the holy sites she visited, she offered heartfelt prayers for the success of her son the Augustus and for her grandsons the Caesars in governing the Roman Empire. Her pious and benevolent actions were meant to make atonement for and to distract attention from the family tragedy, and to increase public support for and to maintain divine endorsement of the Constantinian Dynasty (Ill. 63).[13]



Ill. 62 A drawing of the Constantinian Petrine Shrine dedicated by Constantine and Helena in the original St. Peter's Basilica at the west end of Rome in AD 326.



Ill. 63 Bronze coin with a bust of Helena the Augusta on the obverse, and the empress standing and personifying the "Security of the Commonwealth" on the reverse (324–25).

Helena most probably sailed from Rome and landed at the provincial capital of Caesarea Maritima on the northwestern coast of Palestine in the late summer or autumn of 326. She came as the Augusta of the Roman Empire with the sanction to use whatever imperial resources were necessary for her state visit. Imperial officials and military detachments assisted her throughout her travels across the empire and around the eastern provinces over the next year. Eusebius of Caesarea, the Metropolitan Bishop of Palestine, assuredly greeted her upon her arrival, and probably advised and guided her on her visits to sacred sites in the region—at least his account in the *Vita Constantini* of her activities and constructions seems to be based on eyewitness knowledge.[14] Her entourage probably traveled inland from Caesarea, visiting Nazareth, Capernaum, and the Sea of Galilee region in the north of the province where the early ministry of Jesus had taken place; and then followed in the footsteps of the Lord to Jerusalem in the south of Palestine where his passion and resurrection had occurred according to the Gospels. Eusebius reported that all throughout her journey she "rendered due reverence to the ground upon which the Savior's feet had trodden," and frequently mingled with the worshipers and generously made offerings even in "the churches of the smallest cities."[15]

Helena probably reached Jerusalem in the early months of 327. By the time she arrived, much work had already been done by order of Constantine at the site of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. The mound of Golgotha and the tomb of the Lord had been located just beyond the north-west corner of the first-century walls of Herodian Jerusalem. The emperor Hadrian had included this area as a part of the city when he rebuilt Jerusalem in the second century as the Roman colony of *Aelia Capitolina*. He had, however, desecrated this most holy of Christian sites by covering it over with earth, enclosing it in concrete, and constructing above it a pagan temple to Venus. The location was polluted with pagan rites for the next two centuries. After his conquest of the east, Constantine had been informed of the situation. He had been appalled, and had ordered officials in the area to destroy the temple, to cart away the concrete foundation and earth

fill, and to attempt to uncover the sepulchre of Jesus. His agents were successful; and before he departed for Rome, the emperor had dispatched letters to Dracilianus, the Vicar of the Oriens Diocese, and Macarius, the Bishop of Jerusalem, instructing them to oversee the construction of an immense ecclesiastical complex focused upon the tomb of the Lord. Eusebius, who interpreted the uncovering of the sepulchre as analogous to the resurrection of the Savior, preserved the emperor's epistle to Macarius in his *Vita Constantini*. In it, Constantine stated that

> I have no greater care than how I may best adorn with a splendid structure that sacred site, which, under divine direction, I have disencumbered as it were of a heavy weight of foul idol worship; a spot which has been accounted holy from the beginning in the judgment of God, but which now appears holier still, since it has brought to light a clear assurance of our Savior's passion.

The letter suggested that precious marble columns, beautiful decorated walls, and a gold coffered ceiling should be used in the church erected at the site so that it would "surpass all others whatsoever in beauty." Helena was in Jerusalem at the time when the foundations were being laid for the great *Church of the Holy Sepulchre* in the northwestern quarter of the city. She would have been able to climb up the porphyry staircase leading from the central road of the city into the complex, and walk through the foundations of the eastern courtyard, the basilican church and the western courtyard

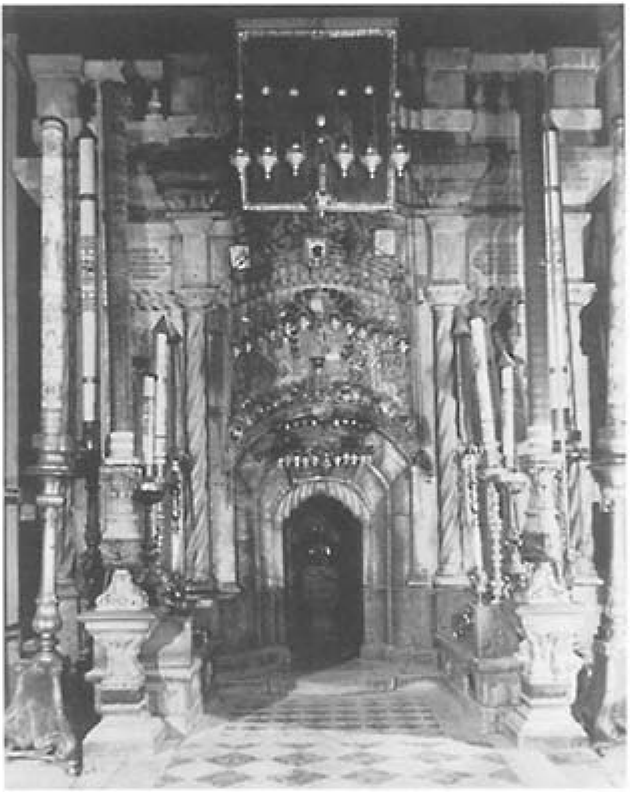


Ill. 64 Aerial view of the old city of Jerusalem from the southwest to the northeast, with the Holy Sepulchre complex to left of center and the Mount of Olives to the upper right.

which all led to the sacred tomb of Christ at the west end of the site. She certainly got to inspect the latter shortly after it had been disencumbered from its surrounding rocks and earth, and was being enclosed in a splendid shrine.[16]

The complex was constructed over the next eight years, and formally dedicated by a Church council in September 335. The Constantinian structures stood until they were largely torn down by an Egyptian sultan in 1009. A Byzantine emperor and European crusaders reconstructed the western end of the complex with a domed rotunda over the tomb shrine and a late Romanesque church attached to the east end of it in the mid-eleventh and mid-twelfth centuries. With only minor repairs in the sixteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the buildings at the site of the Holy Sepulchre today are mostly medieval (Ills. 64–66). However, ancient literary descriptions, medieval artistic depictions, and modern archaeological investigations permit the Constantinian complex to be accurately envisioned again. Eusebius, who probably visited Jerusalem with Helena in 327 and later attended the dedication council in 335, recorded the most detailed description of it in the *Vita Constantini*. The ancient complex began on the western side of the central avenue of the city (the *cardo*) which ran from the Damascus Gate in the center of the northern wall down toward Mt. Zion on the south-western side of Jerusalem. A beautiful range of porphyry steps led up to three great doors which opened onto an eastern atrium. This was a courtyard open to the air in the center and surrounded with covered, colonnaded walkways. It provided an area for pilgrims to rest and prepare their senses for the sacred places they were going to experience. From here a large central door led into a magnificent church where regular liturgical worship services were held. It was a longitudinal basilica with a high central nave terminating in an apse at its west end, and with double aisles and upper galleries running the length of its north and south sides. A pilgrim from Bordeaux visited the nearly completed church in 333, and noted that it glistened with "miraculous beauty." Eusebius described it as "a noble work which rose to a vast height and extended greatly both in length and breadth." He mentioned a floor of multicolored marble slabs, the walls of polished stones, and a ceiling of gold coffering, which made "the entire building glitter as it were with rays of light." Egeria, a pilgrim from Spain who visited Jerusalem *ca.* 383, agreed, and marveled at the abundance of gold, mosaics, and precious marbles employed in the fabric of the basilica. She noted that a large portion of the rock of Golgotha had been left standing outside the southwestern corner of the church, and that it was known as the *"Holy Church of the Martyrium"* (from Greek μαρτύριον—"testimony," "proof"). The basilica thus testified to the crucifixion of the Lord, and offered proof of his role as the promised Messiah of the Scriptures. Exits beside the apse at the end of the aisles of the church led into a western atrium. Like the eastern atrium, it also had an open courtyard in the center, and covered, colonnaded walkways along its sides. Eusebius recorded that the central area was covered with "a pavement of finely polished stone"; and Egeria reported that lamps were hung around the sides of the courtyard for predawn vigils on Sunday mornings. At the west end of this atrium was the tomb of Jesus. Constantinian architects had cut away the live rock of the area and built a shrine around the tomb which made it the focal point and crown jewel of the whole complex. When it was dedicated in 335, it stood in the open air





Ills. 65 and 66 Exterior of the medieval Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and east front of the Tomb Shrine in Jerusalem.

at the rear of the courtyard. The stone surrounding the tomb chamber had been carved into a polygonal shape. It was covered with marble, and decorated with five columns around the back and sides while a conical roof of tapering panels topped with a cross rose above it. A raised porch with four columns holding a gabled roof adorned the front of the structure. Later in the fourth century, a stone rotunda topped by a domed roof was constructed around and over the tomb shrine, and Egeria recorded that it was then called the *"Holy Church of the Anastasis"* (from Greek ἀνάστασις—"awakening," "resurrection"). This holy edifice thus commemorated the place of the resurrection of Christ. Ancient artistic renderings of the Holy Sepulchre complex depict it as dominating the western half of Jerusalem; and modern archaeological investigations reveal that it extended for a full 130 meters from its eastern entry gates to the western rotunda wall. The magnificence of the structures so impressed Eusebius that he commented with some hyperbole: "it may be that this was that second and new Jerusalem spoken of in the predictions of the prophets."[17]

After an examination of the work at the Holy Sepulchre and a tour of the sacred sites around Jerusalem, Helena and her entourage traveled south of the city a few miles into the Judaean hill country. It was there in the little town of Bethlehem that Jesus had been born according to the Gospels. Early Christians had preserved a tradition that the nativity of the Lord had occurred in a cave employed as a stable, and Helena was able to visit and examine this venerated grotto. Perhaps inspired by the work she had seen in Jerusalem—and her own role as the mother of the great Christian emperor—she ordered an ecclesiastical complex to be constructed at this site and focused upon the holy cave where the Virgin Mary had given birth to the Savior. Constantine concurred with her decision, and the *Church of the Nativity* would be constructed over the next seven years and dedicated in 335.

The ancient complex lasted for nearly two centuries until Justinian ordered that it be rebuilt and enlarged in 529. A Byzantine emperor and a crusader king had it refurbished between 1165 and 1169; however, the church on the site today is largely the sixth-century Byzantine edifice (Ills. 67 and 68). Ancient literary descriptions and modern archaeological work allow the original Constantinian structure to be visualized. Situated at its western end was a large square atrium with an open courtyard in the center and covered colonnades along its sides. From here three small staircases led up to one central and two side doors which opened into a basilican church. It had a central nave with double aisles on either side. Eusebius wrote that Helena and Constantine decorated it "with all possible splendor," and mentioned the "costly presents of silver and gold, and the embroidered hangings" which could be seen within the church. Modern archaeologists have dug down to the original fourth-century level, and found the magnificent mosaic floor with geometric designs used in the Constantinian church. Attached to the eastern end of the basilica was an octagonal shrine topped with a conical metal roof positioned over the grotto of the nativity—with stairs allowing pilgrims to see the site of Christ's incarnation.[18]





Ills. 67 and 68 Aerial of the ancient Church of the Nativity (upper left), and interior of its basilican nave in Bethlehem.

On her way back through Jerusalem, Helena decided that she should dedicate another church in honor of the Savior. The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem would

commemorate the place where God had become man and begun his sojourn with us upon the earth. The Holy Sepulchre Church in Jerusalem would mark the location where Jesus had atoned for our sins and witnessed to eternal life through the resurrection. Helena thought that it would be nice to memoralize the site where Christ had ended his first coming on the earth and ascended back to Heaven. According to one tradition, the Ascension had occurred on the Mount of Olives which rose above the Kidron Valley to the east of Jerusalem. The empress thus ordered a *Church of the Ascension* to be built on the west flank of Olivet. Constantine supported her decision; and it would be erected over the next seven years, and was similar in form to the other churches she and her son were building in the Holy Land. It was entered by a western atrium with colonnaded walkways surrounding a central courtyard. In the center of the complex was a three-aisled basilican church for worship services. At the east end was a raised chancel which was situated atop a cave where it was believed that the Lord had given secret revelations to his disciples about the end of time before his passion. The Bordeaux Pilgrim, Eusebius, and Egeria all mentioned this structure. Yet, in the late fourth century, another church was built at the summit of the Mount of Olives and came to be associated more specifically with the Ascension. Thus, the edifice of Helena was renamed the *Church of the Eleona* (from Greek ἔλαιον—"olive," "olive oil") in late anti-quity. It was destroyed by Persians in the seventh century. Crusaders built a small oratory at the site in the twelfth century, and this gradually became associated with the location where Jesus gave his followers the "Lord's Prayer,"—thus, it is often called the Church of the Pater Noster today. However, part of the floor mosaics and column bases of the fourth century church have survived, and along with ancient literary data, allow the magnificent Constantinian Olivet complex to be envisioned once again.[19]

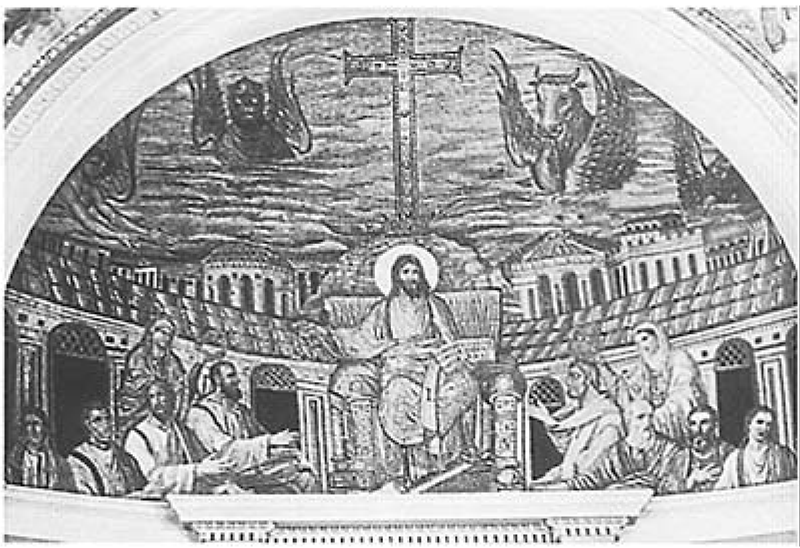
After spending several months visiting the sacred sites in Palestine, and overseeing the start of the Constantinian church-building program there, Helena traveled north so that she could meet her son in Bithynia. She seems to have passed through Antioch, and to have continued her generous acts of charity all along her return journey. Helena probably joined the court of Constantine at Nicomedia in the autumn of 327, and was able to spend the final months of her eventful life with her son and grandsons, regaling them with stories of her wide travels and pious activities in the Holy Land.[20]

Eutropia, the other grandmother of the five children of Constantine and Fausta, also decided to support her bereaved son-in-law in his time of trial. She had shown great loyalty to Constantine in the past, announcing after he had won the Battle of the Mulvian Bridge in 312 that Maxentius had been a bastard sired by a Syrian and not the legitimate heir of Maximian. It was, of course, in her interest to continue to show loyalty to Constantine if she wished to have contact with her grandchildren after the death of Fausta. Yet, she appears to have had genuine esteem for her son-in-law, and he appears to have always treated her with respect as well. Therefore, in the wake of the dynastic tragedy, Eutropia followed the lead of Helena, and also went on a pilgrimage to Palestine to make atonement for the sin of her daughter, and to pray for the welfare of the imperial family. Little is known about her journey, but she seems to have traveled to the Holy Land shortly after Helena (*ca.* 327–28). There she visited sacred sites in old Judaea, and discovered that pagan rituals were being practiced at the Oak of Mamre where Genesis 18 held that Abraham had been visited by God and two angels. She informed Constantine about the situation, and he dispatched letters to governmental officials and Catholic

bishops in the area praising the piety of his mother-in-law, and ordering that the pagan idols and altar be destroyed and that a Christian church be constructed in their place. The *Church of the Visitation* was built at the site, and included a large courtyard where pilgrims could rest from the heat of the desert, and a small basilican chapel in which they could worship where the Supreme God had manifested himself to men. The Constantinian complex lasted until Persians sacked it in the seventh century; however, the ancient foundations and some walls have survived and reveal its original size and plan.[21]

Eutropia may have followed Helena to the court of her son-in-law, and spent her last days near her grandchildren. The date of her demise is not known; but Helena had probably died before her arrival since it seems that Constantine had refounded Drepanum as *Helenopolis* in honor of his mother on 7 January 328. Eusebius reported that the pious Augusta passed away in her eightieth year with her loving son at her side and holding her hands as she exhaled her last breath.[22]

Helena died with the memory of her deeds fresh in the minds of the imperial populace; and legends would greatly enhance her reputation in the next century. When old wood beams and nails were discovered at the construction site of the Holy Sepulchre complex, they were soon identified



Ill. 69 The Santa Pudenziana apse mosaic depicting the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to the left and the Church of the Nativity to the right of Golgotha and Jesus (fifth century).



Ill. 70 The Madaba Map mosaic depicting the Holy Sepulchre complex in the foreground of the north-south cardo running across Jerusalem (sixth century).

as relics of the crucifixion. Since she had been the most famous of the early pilgrims to visit Jerusalem, and since she had been there when work on the tomb shrine was just beginning, she was eventually credited with the the discovery of the wood of the cross—the *lignum crucis*. The sources contemporary with Helena, however, did not mention this; and the later ones which did were so late and so fantastic that they are given little credence by most historians. It is unfortunate that the historical Helena of the fourth century was displaced by the legendary saint of the fifth century—her real actions were so valuable that the later legends only trivialized a great lady.[23] She enlightened the Roman world to the sacred sites of the Holy Land by her visits, and she commemorated the key events in the life of Christ by her constructions. The increase in the frequency of pilgrimages to Palestine and the rise in the popularity of portrayals of its shrines in late antiquity resulted from her deeds. The great Santa Pudenziana apse mosaic of fifth-century Rome which depicts the Holy Sepulchre and Holy Nativity churches so vividly, and the gigantic Madaba Map floor mosaic of sixth-century Jordan which depicts the tomb of Christ and the city of Jerusalem at the center of the world reflect her work (Ills. 69 and 70). By her efforts (and those of Eutropia), Helena succeeded in restoring a patina of piety to the Constantinian dynasty.[24]

IX
IMPERIAL CONCERNS AND CHRISTIAN CONSTANTINOPLE

> Constantine now named Byzantium Constantinople after him-self in memory of his notable victory. As if it were his native city, he adorned it with great refinements and wished it to be equal to Rome.
>
> *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* 6. 30

While his mother and mother-in-law were carrying out their pilgrimages to Palestine, Constantine was traveling back to Bithynia. From the autumn of 326 to the spring of 328, he would again become involved in the theological and episcopal squabbles of the eastern Church. He would call a "Second Session of the Nicene Council" to examine repentant Arians for readmittance into the Church; and he would have to intervene in an ecclesiastical dispute at Antioch. When the Church seemed to have been restored to peace, he would then leave for the west on a last major tour of the empire over the next two years. He would take his son Constantine II to Trier, and install him as the new Caesar of the west. He would train his heir politically and militarily along the Rhine in 328–29; and then he would tour the Danube front on his way back to the east. In May of 330, he would enjoy one of his greatest triumphs as he dedicated Constantinople as the "New Rome" and Christian capital of the Roman Empire.[1]

After the Council of Nicaea, Constantine continued to hope that he might attain full unity of faith in the Church. Thus, while journeying east along the Danube in late 326, he dispatched messages to Arius letting him know that he would be readmitted to the Church if he were to accept the Nicene standard of belief. Arius and an Alexandrian supporter named Euzoius, who had been in exile in Illyricum, responded in a letter to the emperor in early 327 confirming the orthodoxy of their faith and expressing their wish for peace:

> Arius and Euzoius, to our Most Religious and Pious Lord, the Emperor Constantine.
>
> In accord with the command of your devout piety, sovereign lord, we declare our faith, and, before God, profess in writing that we and our adherents believe as follows: We believe in one God the Father Almighty, and in the Lord Jesus Christ his Son, who was begotten of him before all ages, God the Word through whom all things were made, both those which are in the heavens and those upon the earth; who descended, and became incarnate, and suffered, and rose again, ascended into the heavens, and will again come to judge the living and the dead. Also in the Holy Spirit, and in the resurrection of the flesh, and in the life of the coming

> age, and in one Catholic Church of God, extending from one end of the earth to the other.
>
> This faith we have received from the holy gospels, the Lord therein saying to his disciples: "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." If we do not so believe and truly receive the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as the whole Catholic Church and the holy Scriptures teach (in which we believe in every respect), God is our judge both now, and in the coming judgment. Wherefore we beseech your piety, most devout emperor, that we who are persons consecrated to the ministry, and holding the faith and sentiments of the Church and of the holy Scriptures, may by your pacific and devoted piety be reunited to our mother, the Church, with all superfluous questions and disputings being avoided, so that both we and the whole Church being at peace, may in common offer our accustomed prayers for your tranquil reign, and on behalf of your whole family.

The statement of faith by Arius and Euzoius was simple, and, so far as it went, in accord with the accepted teachings of the Church about the Triune God of Christianity. Yet, the phrases which must have most impressed Constantine in this epistle by the exiled heretics were the ones about desiring peace in the Church and offering prayers for his dynasty. These were things which Constantine emphasized throughout his reign as a Christian emperor; and he especially felt a need for the latter in the wake of the dynastic tragedy.[2]

Constantine welcomed Arius and Euzoius to his court a few months later, and questioned them at length about their beliefs. He was convinced through this interview that they had fully accepted the faith as formally defined at Nicaea. So, he wrote to Bishop Alexander in Alexandria triumphantly announcing that he had examined Arius and Euzoius carefully concerning "our Catholic faith," and that he hoped that they would be readmitted to communion with the Alexandrian Church so that he might see all his Christian brothers in peace and concord. Alexander did not trust Arius, and demurred at the request of the emperor. Seeing a need for fuller episcopal action on this issue, Constantine assembled a large number of bishops at Nicomedia or Nicaea in the winter of 327–28. The ecclesiastical leaders examined the repentant heretics, and voted that they should be accepted back into the Church. Hearing of the rehabilitation of Arius, the exiled Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis of Nicaea wrote to the council and requested that it intercede with the emperor to have them restored as well. They reasoned that they had accepted the homoousian formula and signed the creed at Nicaea, and had only been exiled for communicating with Arians; but now that Arius himself had been accepted back into the true Church, it seemed appropriate that they also be allowed to return. The council and the emperor agreed, and the exiled bishops were recalled and restored to their episcopal seats.[3]

As the year 328 began, Constantine must have felt that he was finally getting close to obtaining his goals of full theological unity and true brotherly concord in the Church. With the submission of Arius and his allies to the Nicene Creed, the emperor had on the surface established unity of belief; and, while he was alive, no one dared to challenge the Nicene theological formula. Brotherly concord, however, proved to be a much more elusive goal for him. Although the Donatists were isolated in North Africa, they remained

in schism with the rest of the Church. And although virtually all eastern Christians accepted the Nicene Creed, some had different interpretations of key phrases within it, and held grudges from the controversy surrounding it. Thus, disputes among his Christian brethren would periodically test the patience of Constantine during the later years of his reign.

Shortly after his reconciliation with Arius and his friends, a dissension among the faithful in Antioch would require the attention of the pious emperor. Eustathius, the orthodox bishop of the metropolis of Syria and a zealous defender of the divinity of Christ, had been unhappy with the leniency shown to Arians at Nicaea. He desired that they be excommunicated from, not rehabilitated in, the Church. So, rather than following the imperial counsels for harmony after the "Great Council," he had driven his theological opponents out of Antioch and had attacked the credal glosses of Eusebius of Caesarea. Factions had arisen in the city for and against its fiery patriarch, and civil strife resulted. Constantine was forced to send a special military detachment to restore civil peace. Several eastern bishops who had been sympathetic to Arianism had been embarrassed by Eustathius at Nicaea, and wished to retaliate against him. They insisted that a regional synod be held to deal with the problems at Antioch and that Eusebius of Caesarea be invited to preside over it. This Council of Antioch seems to have been held in the early spring of 328. Eustathius was vulnerable to his enemies on a number of grounds. First, in his theology he had a tendency to overemphasize the unity of the Father and Son to the exclusion of their separate personas—too close to the modalistic monarchian heresy Sabellianism for many eastern prelates. Second, in his private life he may have had too close a relationship with an unmarried woman which fueled gossip about his personal morality. And third, he appears to have made disparaging remarks to or about the Empress Helena—he probably said something negative about her naive attachment to Lucian of Antioch, whose Nicomedian martyrdom she may have bragged about seeing and whose tomb at Drepanum she may have mentioned when she had conversed with Eustathius while visiting Antioch on her pilgrimage. Eustathius appears to have been deposed by the council on all three of these grounds. He appealed to the emperor, who interviewed him in Nicomedia. Although Constantine probably determined that Eustathius was orthodox in his theology, he confirmed the deposition of the council because of the lapse in his morals and the insult to his mother—as well as the fact that he was not a peacemaker but a provocateur in a major urban center of the empire. The emperor sent him into exile in Illyricum, and he died there about a decade later. The majority of the council then voted to make Eusebius the the Bishop of Antioch. When there was resistance from anti-Arians who wanted to restore Eustathius, Eusebius demurred. Constantine intervened again, and sent letters to the people of Antioch, to the bishops at the council, and to Eusebius. He realized that transferring Eusebius from Caesarea would just cause more trouble in Antioch; so he praised Eusebius for his work at the council and for his fidelity to Church canons which discouraged bishops from moving to different sees; and he suggested to the people and bishops at Antioch that they select another candidate worthy of the Antiochan episcopate. They did so, and peace returned to the church and city. Some ancient writers and many modern scholars have portrayed the return of Arius and his allies, and the fall of Eustathius as a change in the policy of Constantine from support for the Orthodox cause to favor for the Arian camp. This was not really true. Constantine reconciled with Arius, Eusebius, and Theognis

because they had the intelligence to support the Nicene formula and the goal of concord in the Church. He allowed the deposition of Eustathius because he seemed to be a trouble-maker who was disturbing the faithful. He appreciated Eusebius of Caesarea because he appeared to be acting as a mediator in, and not a maker of, dissension. The diplomacy practiced by the former Arians won the favor of the emperor while the truculence exhibited by Eustathius lost his support. Constantine remained committed to the Nicene Creed and to brotherly concord within the Church.[4]

With the eastern Church seemingly at peace once again, Constantine turned his mind to pressing imperial concerns. By the late spring of 328, it had been two years since the northwestern provinces had known the security of having a Constantinian emperor in their midst. The Augustus had left his loyal prefect Junius Bassus at Trier to administer the area when he had returned to the east after the Vicennalia; but that was not the same for the provincials as having a Constantius, a Constantine, or a Crispus residing in Trier. The Gallic Prefecture was the region from which his dynasty had risen to power, and Constantine felt the need to reward and retain the loyalty of his Gallic subjects by setting up another son as Caesar there. With the departure of Helena and Eutropia from Rome for their pilgrimages to the east, the old capital was also left without the prestige of being the residence of the grand dames of the dynasty. The Senate and people of Rome had been very supportive of Constantine during his rise to supremacy over the empire, and he felt the need to reward the old capital with a symbolic dynastic presence even if he could no longer bear to visit the city. Therefore, in the spring of 328, he decided to install his oldest son Constantine II as a Caesar at Trier, and to have his mother Helena buried in an imperial mausoleum at Rome.

The emperor, his son, officials of the central court, and a contingent of the military left the Bosporus area around 1 May, and traveled south of the Danube toward the west during the summer of 328. When the imperial procession neared the passes into Italy, Constantine had a key official and part of his imperial guard split off from the entourage and take the body of his mother down to Rome for her formal burial. Helena had owned a palace and some estates at the east end of Rome—both inside and outside of the Aurelian Walls. The *Via Labicana* (now the *Via Casilina*) ran through this area out to the *Basilica Beatis Martyribus Marcellino et Petro,* where her son had constructed a great basilican martyrial church over some Christian catacombs in honor of two minor martyrs of the Diocletianic persecution. He had situated a round mausoleum with a domed roof atop it at the eastern end of the basilica, and had placed a grand porphyry sarcophagus in a niche within it. The sarcophagus was decorated with reliefs of horse soldiers tramping over barbarians along its sides, and clearly indicates that it was originally meant to be the tomb of Constantine himself. However, since by then he had started to build another tomb for himself in his new city of Constantinople, he donated the sarcophagus and mausoleum at Rome to his mother instead. Eusebius praised the way in which Constantine had the body of his mother "escorted on its way to the royal city by a vast train of guards, and there deposited in a royal tomb." The bones of Helena seem to have remained in this tomb until the mid-twelfth century when they were moved for the sake of safety to the Church of Santa Maria in Ara Coeli on the Capitoline hill inside Rome. Pope Anastasius IV had her sarcophagus moved to the Lateran Basilica and designated it to be used as his own tomb in 1154. Pope Pius VI had the sarcophagus moved across the city to the Vatican at the end of the eighteenth century. It has remained there, and is now on display in the Sala a

Croce Greco of the Vatican Museum. The Constantinian basilica of the martyrs three miles to the southeast of the city has disappeared, but the ruins of the 27.74-meter-wide *Mausoleum Helenae* stand majestically in a field behind the little modern parish church at the site, and still mark the spot where Constantine originally buried Helena and honored Rome with her imperial remains.[5]

While Helena was being buried in magnificent style at Rome, Constantine and Constantine II had reached Trier by September 328. His Gallic subjects were probably very happy to see their emperor and his son in their midst again. Constantine swiftly ensconced twelve-year-old Constantine II as the Caesar of the west. For several months, he tutored his son in the imperial duties that he would be expected to carry out. He taught him how to work through the praetorian prefect in running the civil administration of the western provinces: overseeing officials, issuing laws and taking judicial appeals, collecting taxes and minting coins, and provisioning the armies. He taught him how to work with his military commanders for securing the frontiers: leading him on a successful campaign against the Alamanni on the Rhine, and instructing him in war strategy and battle tactics. In January 329, Constantine and Constantine II entered upon the consulship for the year together, and celebrated their return to Trier with public games, parades, and panegyrical orations. Coins were issued for CONSTANTINUS IUN NOB CAES ("Constantine Junior the Noble Caesar"), and announced the GAUDIUM ROMANORUM ("Joy of the Romans") at the victory over ALAMANNIA, and the COSS IIII ("fourth Consulship") of the Caesar. In the spring of 329 as the adolescent Caesar was approaching his thirteenth birthday, the proud Augustus left his son in the care of his trusted Christian prefect Bassus, and traveled east to Sirmium.[6]

For the next year, Constantine would campaign against the Goths, and oversee the empire at sites along the Danube. During his journey westward in July of 328, he had dedicated a great stone bridge crossing the middle of the lower Danube from Oescus on the south bank to Sucidava on the north bank of the river. At 2,437 meters in length, it was the longest bridge the Romans had ever constructed. He had also ordered troops to build camps and lay roads on the northern side of the river. A couple of hundred miles to the west, Constantia was built across the river from Margum; and about 150 miles to the east, Dafne was built above the river from Transmarisca; and a new road led from the middle of the lower Danube at Sucidava over 50 miles inland to Romula. These new military constructions along the Danube announced to the Sarmatian and Gothic barbarians that the Roman Empire under Constantine was no longer just on the defensive; but, as in the days of the "good emperors" Trajan and Hadrian, it could again attack its enemies in their own territory. When he returned to the Danube in the spring of 329, he led his armies across the river, and defeated the Gothic tribes and drove them away from the Danube up toward the Transylvanian Mountains. He was thus able to reclaim a part of the Dacian territory from which Aurelian had retreated, and employ it as a buffer zone to protect the Danubian provinces beneath it. To his earlier victory titles of GERMANICUS MAXIMUS and SARMATICUS MAXIMUS, he was now able to add GOTHICUS MAXIMUS. Bronze medallions issued from the Rome mint over the next few years proudly depicted the emperor marching over the new bridge or sailing across the river with the personification of Victory beside him and bowed Goths beneath him, and with inscriptions announcing the VIRTUS AUGUSTI, VICTORIA AUGUSTI, or VICTORIA GOTHICA. The new mint at Constantinople issued gold, silver and bronze coins between

328 and 329 depicting the seated figure of Victory above a kneeling captive under the inscription CONSTANTINIANA DAFNE—celebrating the new fort above the Danube and the victory and protection it offered.[7]

After his triumph over the Goths, Constantine spent the final months of 329 and the early months of 330 inspecting the Moesian and Thracian Dioceses of the empire. He made a visit to Naissus, the city of his birth, and ordered that it be adorned with magnificent new buildings.[8] This sojourn in eastern Europe gave him time to reflect upon how far he had come since his service here as a young soldier in the courts of Diocletian and Galerius, and how much he had consolidated or changed the reform policies of his imperial predecessors. He had respected their secular policies, and only made minor revisions in them. However, he had rejected their religious policies, and truly carried out a major revolution in them.

Politically, Constantine saw the advantages of having more than one emperor to rule the territories of the Roman world; but his experiences with the unstable tetrarchies after the retirement of Diocletian had convinced him that one emperor must be the supreme ruler, and that any others he allowed to rule with him should clearly be subordinate, and be chosen from among his sons or close blood relatives whom he could trust to follow his lead. So, after the civil war Constantine was the *Maximus Augustus* and determined policy for the whole empire; but, he gradually trained and elevated his sons to be his *Caesares* and set them up to rule different regions and enforce common policies through the whole Roman world. As Constantine continued to employ the administrative framework into which Diocletian had divided the empire, he decided that he would need four successors, and elevated one of the sons of his loyal half-brothers to be a fourth Caesar with his own three sons. Thus, he kept the tetrarchic system, but transformed it into a *Christian dynastic tetrarchy* by the close of his reign.[9]

Militarily, Constantine realized that the empire still needed the line of small forts, cavalry units, and legionary bases positioned at close points along the frontiers to hold back the barbarians in the preclusive defense system set up by Diocletian; however, his experiences in facing internal enemies in civil wars and in fighting barbarians within the borders convinced him of the necessity of a strong, central mobile field force attached to the emperor which could react swiftly against internal usurpations and external invasions. So, while retaining most of the border defense forces of the previous generation, he created the large central army known as the *comitatenses* (literally the “companion forces”). He pulled a few units from the frontier, and enlisted some new units to build this central striking force of mobile cavalry formations and fast-marching foot soldiers which could move with great speed to endangered areas. Since Constantine had disbanded the old Praetorian Guard at Rome, and deprived the Praetorian Prefects of military command, he instituted two new supreme commanders for the central mobile field force: the *magister equitum* (the “Master of Cavalry Forces”) and the *magister peditum* (the “Master of Foot Soldiers”). They were chosen from the ranks of professional soldiers rather than the senatorial class. Commanders of divisions within the central army were often known as *comites* (“companions”—ancestor of the medieval term “count”). Divisions of this central field army were quartered at interior bases, and given higher pay and more privileges than the stationary frontier forces. The tetrarchic *limitanei* and *ripenses* units (“border troops” and “riverbank troops”) were commanded by *duces* (“generals”—ancestor of the medieval term “duke”), who were also drawn from the ranks

of professional soldiers. Military careers and commands were henceforth separated from civilian careers and offices. Military commanders reported up the ranks to the *magistri* and the emperor, preventing too great a concentration of power in the hands of any official, such as the senatorial governors-general of the past empire. Therefore, Constantine expanded upon the military reforms of Diocletian, and constructed a true "defense-in-depth" system with a half-million-man army of *comitatenses* and *limitanei,* which gave a quarter century of internal peace and external safety to the Roman world.[10]

Administratively, he completed the work of Diocletian by expanding the bureaucratic offices of the central court, in formalizing the regional divisions of the provinces, and by bringing the senatorial class back into imperial service. The entourage of officials which traveled with the Augustus and resided in the imperial palaces of the empire had come to be known as the *comitatus,* and the people who staffed the offices within it were styled the *palatini* (translated loosely as the "imperial court," and "palace officials"). The Praetorian Prefects, who had been the all-powerful chief ministers of the emperors in the past, with both control over the government bureaucracy and command over military troops, had gradually lost many of their functions and evolved into prime ministers for imperial civil affairs. It was Constantine who completed this process and developed a new corps of palace officials to staff his central court. He created the *magister officiorum,* the "Master of Offices," who directed the secretarial bureaux *(scrinia)* which did research, drafted documents, kept records, and scheduled audiences with the emperor. This official also controlled the *scholae palatini,* the private guards of the emperor, and the *agentes in rebus,* the imperial couriers who delivered messages and gathered information throughout the provinces. Several ancient sources name Philumenus as holding this post for a number of years under Constantine—he appears to have been the court official who circulated the creed of faith at Nicaea among the bishops for their signatures. Late in his reign, Constantine seems to have added another official, the *quaestor sacri palatii,* the "Quaestor of the Sacred Palace," who served as the chief legal officer of the emperor and helped him draft edicts, constitutions, and rescripts—the philosopher Flavius Hermogenes probably held this office at Constantinople. He retained the two key financial officials who had long served previous imperial courts, but he endowed them with elevated titles: the *comes sacrarum largitionum,* and the *comes rei privatae*. The former, the "Count of the Sacred Largesses," was in charge of state mines and mints, and helped the emperor design the motifs and control the quantity of gold, silver, and bronze coins circulated in the empire. The latter, the "Count of Crown Properties," was in charge of the properties owned by the emperor and the rents and products gained from them. Constantine kept the office of the *praefectus praetorio,* the "Praetorian Prefect," but stripped it of military command, and transformed its holder into a prime minister for the civil administration of the provinces. Over the last decade of his reign as he set up Caesars across the empire, he assigned each a prefect to oversee the administration of their regions which gradually came to be known as *praefecturae*. Underneath the prefects were the *vicarii,* the "Vicars," in charge of the *dioceses,* the groupings of provinces set up by Diocletian, and the *praesides,* the "Governors," in the individual *provinciae*.

Imperial edicts and laws were dispatched down through this civilian hierarchy—from the prefects through the vicars to the governors. Census information was gathered at the local and provincial levels, and sent back up from the governors through the vicars to the

prefects. The central government drew up its budget on the basis of this data, and, with the help of the court financial officers, the prefects oversaw the collection of the taxes in coin and in kind needed to support the government and the army. These administrators also ran the secular legal system of the empire, with the prefects taking appeals from provincial judges and courts. As these officials no longer commanded armies, Constantine brought the Roman (and later Constantinopolitan) senatorial class back into the government. Many senators were chosen to serve as prefects, vicars and governors under him. He made a few modifications in Diocletian's arrangements to encourage senatorial participation—reuniting a few smaller provinces into bigger ones to make it more prestigious to govern them, and using special titles, like *proconsul* or *corrector,* for provinces especially reserved for senatorial administrators.

The names of many of the prefects from Constantine's reign are known because of laws addressed to them by the emperor, and because they were sometimes honored with consulships. Evagrius served as the prefect for Constantine several times (326, 329–31, and 336–37). Junius Bassus served as a prefect in the west under both Crispus and Constantine II (318–32), and Flavius Ablabius served as a prefect in the east for Constantine (331–35) and his son Constantius II (336–37). Bassus and Ablabius were honored as the Ordinary Consuls for the year 331, and the latter was the recipient of the famous constitution confirming the jurisdiction of bishops to take appeals from secular courts in 333. The higher officials in the imperial *comitatus* came to be known as the *consistorium* when they met as a body to advise the emperor on policy. He eventually devised the title of *comites,* "Companions," for the more important of his officials to whom he entrusted the top positions in the court and the army, or for special assignments in the provinces. Thus, Constantine expanded and refined many of the administrative reforms of Diocletian in an effort to create a more efficient government.[11]

Economically, Constantine retained most of the policies of his tetrarchic predecessors; but he stabilized the gold coinage and equalized the tax burdens of the various classes within the regimented structure of the late Roman Empire. He enforced Diocletian's laws mandating hereditary services in essential professions—soldiers in the army, workers in arms factories, *coloni* on farms, and *decuriones* in cities were all expected to stay in their positions and to provide heirs who would continue to ensure to the state the services and goods it needed to function. However, the restoration of political stability with the end of civil wars led to a restoration of civic confidence in government and economic prosperity in society. With the confiscation of temple treasures and the imposition of money taxes, the emperor had the bullion he needed to mint a regular supply of gold and silver coins, and to restore a true money economy to the Roman world.

Early in his reign in the west, he had switched from the 60 to a pound standard used by Diocletian to a 72 to a pound standard for minting gold coins, and created the *solidus* (*ca.* 310). After the defeat of Licinius, he imposed this standard on the east (*ca.* 324). This size of coin was easier to weigh and mint, and easier to carry and exchange than the older one, and became extremely popular for major purchases. Constantine also devised two new silver denominations after the civil war—the *miliarensis* at 72 to the pound, and the *siliqua* at 96 to the pound. These were minted in quantity from a few key mints; yet, the silver coinage never regained the popularity it had enjoyed in earlier imperial times. He allowed the size of the bronze *folles* minted in the later years of his reign to become smaller, but employed standard motifs to keep them familiar to the public. Small bags of

these bronze coins would be used to buy the necessities of daily life. The taxation system devised by Diocletian had been very oppressive on land owners. Constantine established the *peraequator census* commissioners to reassess the land tax owed to the state; and he remitted a fourth part of this tax by not collecting it from land owners every fourth year. He instituted two new taxes to make up for the lost revenue: the *collatio follis,* which was a small income tax on the wealth of members of the senatorial class, and the *collatio lustralis,* which was a tax on the goods of merchants. These taxation changes helped spread the burden of supporting the expanded army and government of the late empire more evenly across Roman society. Finally, the extensive construction programs of Constantine across the empire—and especially in Constantinople—put men in the transportation and building trades to work by the thousands, and increased the general prosperity of his subjects. Therefore, by continuing but refining the economic reforms of Diocletian, Constantine made an effort to upgrade material life in the empire.[12]

Culturally, Constantine totally reversed the religious policies of Diocletian and the earlier tetrarchic emperors. They had patronized Olympian paganism and had attempted to destroy the Christian religion through brutal persecutions. Constantine felt that they had erred grievously and failed miserably. His conversion experience and victorious career had convinced him that the God of Christianity was the only true Deity, and that he had been given a special mission by the Almighty to protect the Catholic Church and to promote the Christian religion. Only the resistance of some pagans in the empire and the dissension of some Christians in the Church had prevented him from completely outlawing paganism after his victory in the crusade against Licinius. However, his feelings of guilt and his desire for atonement from the tragedies in Italy made him all the more anxious to promote the religion of the Redeemer in the last decade of his rule. Eusebius reported how Constantine "made it his constant aim to glorify his Savior God [and] used every means to rebuke the superstitious errors of the heathen" during this time.[13] After 327 his propagation of Christianity grew ever stronger while his toleration for paganism wore ever thinner. One of the more ubiquitous examples of his Christian propaganda was the magnificent series of "prayer pose" coins issued throughout these years. Eusebius wrote about them:

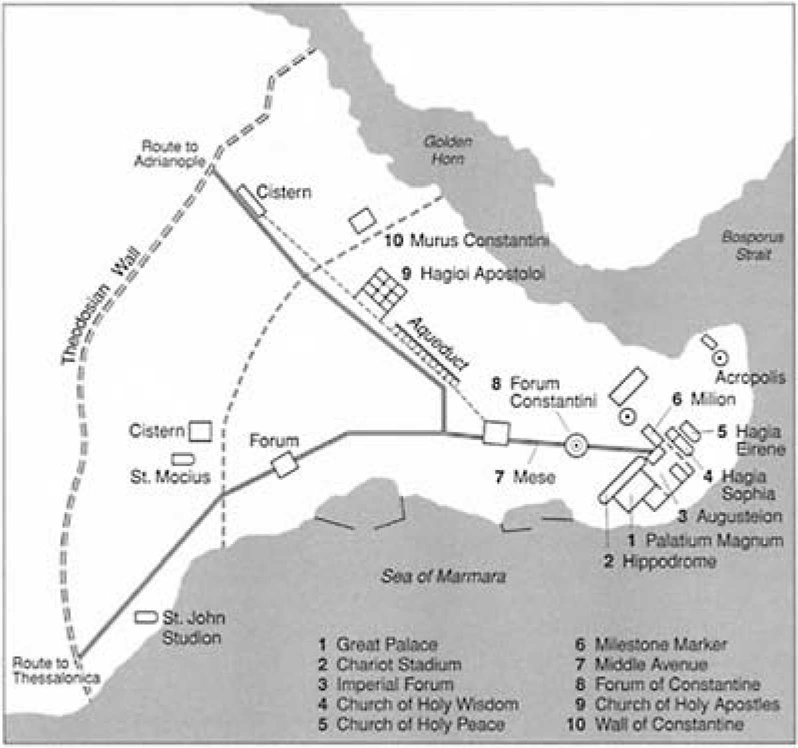
> How deeply his soul was impressed by the power of divine faith may be understood from the fact that he ordered that his image be stamped on the golden coins of the empire with his eyes uplifted as in the posture of prayer to God; and this money became current throughout the Roman world. His portrait was also placed at full length over the entrance gates of his palaces in some cities, his eyes upraised to heaven, and his hands outspread as if in prayer.

The numismatic reference was to the series of beautiful gold solidi and medallions which depicted the emperor on the obverse of his coinage wearing a diadem and gazing heavenward in the early Christian manner of prayer. This motif had been introduced shortly after the defeat of Licinius, and it was used on the gold coinage of the major imperial mints in conjunction with Constantine's travels up to the end of his reign in 337. The mints at Rome, Ticinum, Trier, Siscia, Sirmium, Thessalonica, Constantinople, and Nicomedia all employed this image periodically; and most of these and some of the other

mints occasionally used it on silver and bronze coins as well.[14] Though the celestial gaze motif had antecedents in the art of the divinely inspired Hellenistic rulers, neither Constantine nor Eusebius left any doubt that it was to the Christian God that the imperial eyes were upraised in prayer. In his contemporary edicts and letters, the emperor was praising the truth of Christianity while damning the errors of paganism; and in the later *Vita Constantini,* Eusebius recorded the support which Constantine gave to the Catholic Church and the attacks which he made on pagan polytheism. The former included the many Christian basilicas the emperor was constructing in Constantinople, Nicomedia, Jerusalem, and other eastern cities, while the latter included the many pagan temples he was despoiling throughout the eastern provinces. Thus, Constantine had completely reversed the religious policies of Diocletian, and was trying to convert the Roman world to Christianity, and to transform a pagan state into a Christian empire.[15]

A centerpiece of his religious program was the creation of a Christian capital city in the east which would serve as the symbol of his victory over Licinius and the pagan past, and mark the triumph of his faith and the Christian future. He had found an ideal site to build such a city when he was besieging Licinius in eastern Thrace in the summer of 324. There a peninsula protrudes out from the southeastern end of Thracian Europe towards another peninsula projecting off the northern side of Bithynian Anatolia with the Bosporus Strait connecting the Black Sea above and the Sea of Marmora below the two peninsulae. At the southern end of this peninsula is a triangular promontory surrounded on three sides by water—an inlet known as the Golden Horn to the north, the bottom of the Bosporus Strait to the east, and the Sea of Marmora to the south (Map 6). Since the seventh century BC, a small Greek colony named *Byzantium* had stood on the steep hill at the northeastern tip of this promontory; at the end of the second century AD, the Romans had expanded it a little to the south and southwest and built a wall around the enlarged town. This was the place where Constantine had besieged Licinius during his eastern crusade. He could not help but notice its strategic location and the possibilities it offered for expansion into a great capital for the east. It was situated at the nexus of several roadways and trade routes leading both east-west and north-south across the Roman world. One road led west to Thessalonica, and then down through Greece to Dyrrhachium which linked Greece to Italy across the Adriatic; while another ran north-west to Adrianople, and then up through the Balkans and along the Danube to western Europe. Just across the narrow Bosporus Strait, a major route led east to Nicomedia, and then either south through Nicaea and across Anatolia to Syria and the near eastern provinces, or east through Ankara and out to Armenia and the Persian Empire. Sea routes ran north from Byzantium up the Bosporus to the Black Sea area, or south through the Marmora Sea and the Hellespont Strait to the great cities around the Aegean and Mediterranean Basins.

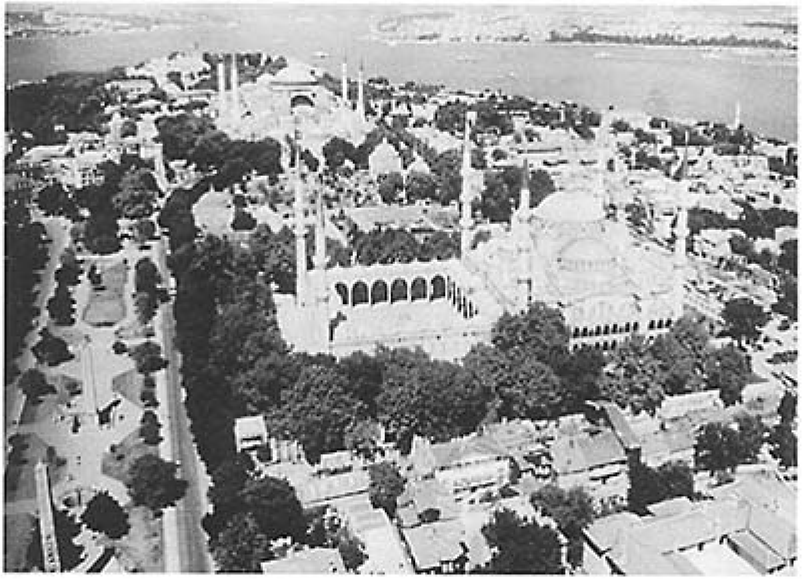
The site provided swift access to the endangered military frontiers along the Danube in eastern Europe or out to the Euphrates in the Near East; and it was centrally located amid the rich trade routes and great cities of the eastern empire. It was also located in a heavily Christianized area, and did not have the numerous temples and pagan traditions of old Rome. Constantine realized that it would be easy to transform small pagan Byzantium into a great Christian city. He had made the decision to do this back in November



Map 6 The New Rome of Christian Constantinople—principal structures with ancient names marked on the map, and the modern names listed below the map.

324. He had ordered that sacrifices in the old Greek temples be stopped, that large palace and cathedral complexes be added to the Roman area, that a new defensive wall be built some two miles west of the old wall—more than quadrupling the size of the city—and that many of the structures of old Rome be duplicated in his new Rome. He had supervised some of the initial construction work in 325–26 before leaving for the vicennial celebrations in the west; but after the dynastic tragedy there, he seems to have decided to build his new capital in the east even more magnificently. From 327 to 330, he dispatched special commissioners around the empire with orders to despoil pagan shrines and temples of their precious treasures, and to ship this material to the Bosporus so that it could be used in building and adorning his "New Rome" for the east—Christian *Constantinopolis*.[16]

By the spring of 330, enough work had been completed at Constantinople that Constantine was able to return from the Balkans to the Bosporus in



Ill. 71 View north over the eastern tip of Constantinople with the Blue Mosque now over the site of the Great Palace.

order to preside over the formal *dedicatio* (dedication) ceremonies of his new capital city. As he inspected his new creation, he must have been pleased with the majestic beauty of the maritime locale and with the magnificent buildings in the metropolitan setting. During the spring, gentle winds blow up from the surrounding seas and often keep the air above the city nearly clear so that residents and visitors are offered panoramic views northward up the Bosporus, eastward to the Asian shore, southward over the Marmora, or westward across the urban skyline. The blue waters and green hills all around make this one of the most lovely and enchanting locations on earth.[17]

The ceremonial core of the city was situated within the short eastern tip of the promontory. At the southern end of this area was the *Great Palace*. The official entry gate at the north was decorated with a tableau depicting the emperor and his sons piercing the great dragon with the Labarum. The interior of the complex included a formal audience hall, a banquet room, offices for staff and guards, and the private quarters for the imperial family, with gardens and exercise grounds behind the east side running down to the seashore.

The beautiful seventeenth-century Blue Mosque of the Ottoman Sultan Ahmet has replaced the Great Palace, but some floor and wall mosaics from the private quarters of the complex have survived and are on display in the Mosaic Museum at the site. They depict children playing stick games and



Ill. 72 Mosaic from the Great Palace of Constantinople of children riding a camel—now in the Istanbul Mosaic Museum.

riding camels, wild animals and exotic birds, and floral motifs, and reflect something of the opulence of the late Roman and Byzantine palace of Constantine's city (Ills. 71 and 72). On the west side of the palace was the *kathisma*—the "imperial box" where the emperor, together with family and officials, would show himself to his subjects on ceremonial occasions. It stood above the *hippodrome,* the gigantic chariot-racing stadium which was the equivalent of the Circus Maximus at Rome. This 480-meter-long by 120-meter-wide structure served as the central entertainment venue for Constantinople where chariot races and circus acts were performed for as many as 100,000 spectators. Though a modern roadway has replaced the original track, remnants of the old hippodrome have survived: along the line of the central *spina* ("spine") from its midpoint to its south end are an ancient Egyptian obelisk erected by Theodosius the Great upon a marble base with fourth-century reliefs of the emperor watching the races (*ca.* 390); the ancient Greek serpent column of Delphi, one of the pagan treasures sent here by order of the emperor to adorn his city; the "Colossus of Constantine," a 32-meter-high stone pillar, which seems to have originally been set up by Constantine the Great in the fourth century and later repaired by Constantine VII in the tenth century to mark the south end and turning point of the race track; and a large portion of the 20-meter-high stone buttressing for the



Ill. 73 The *spina* of the Hippodrome showing the Obelisk of Theodosius, Serpent Column, and the Colossus of Constantine.



Ill. 74 The 20-meter-high stone buttressing for the seats at the south end of the hippodrome above the Sea of Marmora.



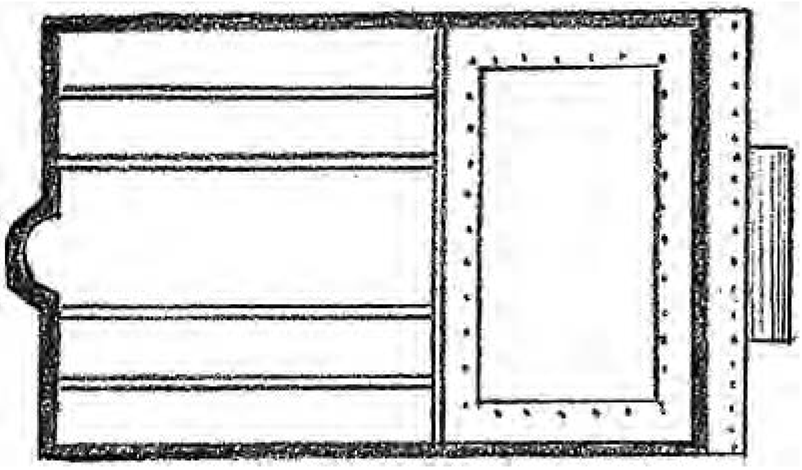
Ill. 73 The west front and dome of Hagia Sophia Cathedral.

seats at the south end of the track—all *ca.* 330 (Ills. 73 and 74). In the center of this ceremonial area was the *Augusteion,* a large open plaza that served as the equivalent of the Forum at Rome. Along its east side was a senatorial curia, at its northeastern corner was a judicial basilica, and along its west side was a public thermae, or bathhouse—only a few traces of the foundations remain from these structures. At the northern end of this area was the *ecclesiastical center* of the capital—the Cathedral of Hagia Sophia, the Church of Hagia Eirene and the episcopal residence. The foundations had only recently been laid (*ca.* 326) for the great *Hagia Sophia* cathedral which was consecrated to Christ as the "Holy Wisdom" of God when Constantine came to dedicate the city; and this basilica would not be finally completed and formally dedicated until the reign of his son Constantius II (360). The Constantinian church was damaged by fire in 404, and reconstructed along its original lines by Theodosius II (*ca.* 415). This second Hagia Sophia was almost completely destroyed in the Nika revolt of 532, and then redesigned and reconstructed in its current form by the later Byzantine Emperor Justinian (532–37, and 558–62; Ills. 75 and 76). Archaeological work has uncovered portions of the west front of the Constantinian church, and these remnants along with ancient descriptions and other contemporary churches allow a hypothetical reconstruction of the original Hagia Sophia. It had a staircase,



Ill. 76 Interior of the Church of Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom).

an elaborate colonnaded propylaeum gate, and an atrium courtyard at its west entrance—the staircase, column bases, and part of the atrium are extant on site. The interior appears to have had a high central nave terminating in an apse at its east end with double lower side aisles and upper galleries running along its north and south flanks. It was thus a basilican-plan church like those Constantine had pioneered at Rome, but with the elaborations he was adding in the east. In fact, an architect named Eustathios, who may have designed the cathedral church at Constantinople, seems to have been dispatched to Jerusalem to build the Martyrium Basilica in the Holy Sepulchre complex along the same lines. This may be part of the reason for the extended construction time of the Constantinople basilica; but its great size and elaborate decorations may have contributed to this as well. Archaeological work has shown that it was 66 meters wide by 120 meters long, and ancient descriptions have revealed that it had the same kind of marble and porphyry decorations seen in the Holy Sepulchre basilica in Jerusalem (Ills. 77 and 78). When Justinian rebuilt it two centuries later, he retained the longitudinal axis of the original, but added the great 180-foot-high dome over the central area and the two half domes at either end which dominate the eastern skyline of Constantinople. Situated just to the north of Hagia Sophia on the acropolis of old Byzantium was *Hagia Eirene* ("Holy Peace"). A "house church" had existed at this site, and Constantine replaced it with a large



Ill. 77 A hypothetical drawing of the floor plan of the original fourth- and fifth-century Hagia Sophia Cathedral.



Ill. 78 Remnants of Constantinian-Theodosian Hagia Sophia—west front entry staircase, propylaeum, and atrium courtyard.

basilica to commemorate the peace which his victory over Licinius had brought to the empire and the Church. It was finished before the end of his reign and served as a cathedral for the bishop and the city until Hagia Sophia was completed. Justinian reconstructed this church two centuries



Ill. 79 View to the north over Hagia Eirene, the acropolis of old Byzantium, and Topkapi Palace of the Ottoman Sultans.

later as well, and added a central dome over its basilican plan—but part of the foundations of the original Constantinian church can still be seen at the east end (Ills. 79 and 80). Above the ecclesiastical area was the *acropolis* of pagan Byzantium, now covered by the Topkapi Palace of the Ottoman Sultans (fifteenth to eighteenth centuries). The emperor seems to have allowed two pagan temples to be left in place here for Rhea and Fortuna, but not to have allowed sacrifices to take place at them. Instead, he ordered that the statues in the temples be reoriented to the position of Christian prayer, and thus transformed them into innocuous symbols of the good fortune of the city. The only structure to survive from the old Byzantium acropolis is the "Column of the Goths," a third-century monument in honor of Claudius Gothicus, the putative great-uncle of Constantius I, for his victory over the Goths near the birthplace of Constantine.[18]

On the western side of the Augusteion was the *Milion,* a "milestone marker" like the Miliarium Aureum in the Forum at Rome, from which distances across the empire were measured. A pillar of the Constantinople Milion is still extant in its original location. From here the *Mese* street led beyond the radius of old Byzantium to the second hill of

the expanded city where the emperor had ordered an imperial forum to be built—the modern Divan Yolu avenue closely follows the ancient "middle street" route. This



Ill. 80 Interior of the Church of Hagia Eirene (Holy Peace).

Forum of Constantine was similar to that of the "good emperor" Trajan in Rome in that it was surrounded by beautiful colonnaded walkways, and had at its center a triumphal column topped by a statue of the emperor. The *Column of Constantine,* however, did not have an interior staircase or exterior relief sculptures like the Roman one; rather, it was made up of nine drums of the lovely Egyptian porphyry stone (via Rome) which Constantine favored in his monuments and buildings. These were placed on a marble base at the bottom, and capped with a Corinthian capital at the top. A bronze statue of the emperor holding a spear and a globe and wearing a radiate crown adorned the top of the monument. The column was reinforced with iron bands in the fifth century (thus its Turkish name Çemberlitaş—"Banded Column"), and its bottom drum and base were stabilized with an expanded stonework socle and base in the eighteenth century. Even though its statue was blown off by fierce winds in the twelfth century, and the column has suffered fire damage on several occasions (thus its English name—"Burnt Column"), it nevertheless remains an impressive monument to the founder of the "New Rome" (Ills. 81 and 82). This triumphal column originally rose to a height of over 35 meters, and could be seen by travelers approaching the city on the sea from quite a distance. It celebrated the *victor* over all the enemies of the Roman world, and commemorated the *structor* of the new capital for the Christian empire.[19]

The Mese avenue continued a few hundred yards beyond the Forum of Constantine, and then divided into two great roads running through the





Ills. 81 and 82 View from Hagia Sophia up the Mese Street to the area of the second hill, and the Column of Constantine.

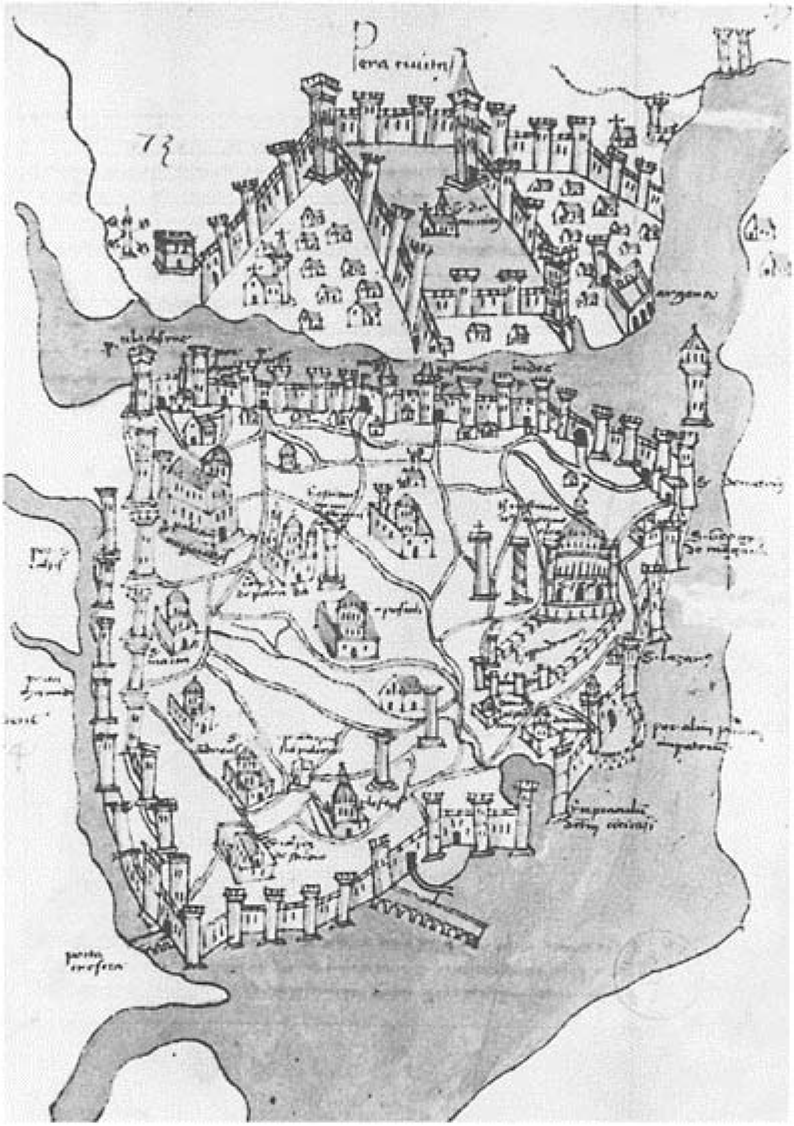
land wall, one linking up with the northwest route toward Adrianople, and the other linking up with the southwest route—the Via Egnatia—to Thessalonica. Smaller roads, walkways, and staircases ran east-west and northsouth in a chessboard pattern throughout the capital, which was divided into fourteen districts like old Rome. The residential areas in the central and western sections of the city were provided with elegant mansions for the governing classes and small houses and apartments for the artisan and trading classes whom Constantine invited to Constantinople. Cisterns, fountains, and fora were provided throughout the city to meet the temporal needs of residents while churches were constructed in and around it to fulfill the spiritual needs of its citizens as it expanded out to and beyond the Wall of Constantine through the fourth and fifth centuries. Eusebius recorded that many public fountains were decorated with Christian motifs to emphasize the emperor's religion.

Along the upper Mese avenue just inside his wall Constantine ordered the construction of the Church of *Hagioi Apostoloi* (the "Holy Apostles") on top of the fourth and highest hill of the city. He planned to have his body laid to rest in a beautiful porphyry sarcophagus in the center of this church amid symbolic tombs for the Apostles of Christ his Savior.[20]

The official *dedicatio* ceremony for Constantinople was staged on 11 May 330—the feast day of the Christian martyr St. Mocius. The "New Rome" was thus dedicated to "the God of the Martyrs" as an offering for the victories of Constantine over the persecutors of Christianity. At the appointed hour, the populace assembled in the hippodrome. The Augustus came out of the Grand Palace and entered the imperial box to the acclamations of the crowd. A ceremonial chariot carrying a gilded statue of Constantine holding the symbol of the *Tyché* ("good fortune") of the city was ushered into the stadium by an honor guard of soldiers, and driven round the track until it reached the kathisma. The emperor saluted his own image as if he were giving obeisance to the founder of the city—a ritual subsequent rulers performed in



Ill. 83 Constantinople *dedicatio* coin with personification of the city holding globular cross scepter on the obverse, and Victory on a prow with shield on the reverse (330–33).



Ill. 84 Oldest extant map of Constantinople by Buondelmonte depicting the capital with its walls, hippodrome, churches, and columns between the Golden Horn and the Sea of Marmora (1420).

honor of Constantine for two centuries. The Augustus then distributed donatives to the people—probably the coins minted for the occasion depicting the personification of the city holding a globular cross scepter over her shoulder on the obverse and standing atop a prow on the reverse, indicating that *Nova Roma* was a Christian city situated by the sea. Games were celebrated in Constantinople through the spring, and the dedication coins for the city were circulated in the empire for many years to advertise the new capital and the new era (Ills. 83 and 84).[21]

X
THE FINAL CAMPAIGNS AND THE EMPEROR'S HEIRS

> Once when he was entertaining bishops at a banquet, he said …"while you are bishops of the things inside the Church, I too am a bishop appointed by God of the things outside of it."
>
> Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* IV. 24

In the half-dozen years after the formal dedication of Constantinople, Constantine would use this new capital city in the east as his normal imperial residence. From here he would direct the administration and defense of the emerging Christian empire he was constructing across the Roman world. His most important actions in these years were his efforts to make Christianity the dominant religion of the state, to establish concord among the bickering bishops in the Church, to conduct campaigns along and to conquer territory above the Danube frontier, and to establish a succession plan and to place his chosen heirs in regional capitals. The emperor would be successful in most of these endeavors, and he would be able to enjoy a magnificent Tricennalia festival in July 336 at Constantinople for his thirty years of rule over the Roman Empire.[1]

Legal subscriptions, coins, and historical references place Constantine in Constantinople for considerable periods of time in the later years of his reign—from May 330 to June 331, from November 331 to January 332, from October 332 to May 333, in June 334, from March to October 335, from November 335 to the spring of 336, and from July 336 to April 337.[2] Eusebius of Caesarea, who received letters from the emperor and resided in the new capital for several months during these years, recorded that the personal piety of Constantine was growing ever stronger. He disclosed that the emperor set aside a special time every day to retreat into the private chambers of the palace and devote himself to prayer. He also reported that Constantine assiduously studied the scriptures and learned commentaries thereupon (including one by Eusebius himself on Easter), and often gave public discourses on the Christian faith to his court circle and palace visitors. The Caesarean bishop had occasion to hear and read some of the palace sermons of the emperor, and summarized their content and organization in this manner:

> He usually divided the subjects of his discourses in this way: first, he would thoroughly expose the error of polytheism, and prove that the superstition of the pagans was mere fraud and a cloak for impiety; then, he would assert the sole sovereignty of God, and deal with his providence, both general and particular; next, he would proceed to the dispensation of salvation, and he would demonstrate its necessity…; and, finally, he

> would deal with the doctrine of divine judgment—and here especially he would appeal most powerfully to the consciences of his hearers, denouncing those who were greedy and violent, and those who were slaves to an inordinate thirst for gain. He caused some of his own aquaintances who were present to feel the severe lash of his words, and to stand with downcast eyes in the knowledge of their guilt, while he testified against them in the clearest and most impressive terms that they would have to render an account of their deeds to God. He reminded them that God himself had given him the empire of the world, portions of which he himself—acting on the same divine principle—had entrusted to their care; but that all alike in due course would be summoned to give account of their deeds to the Supreme Sovereign. Such was his constant testimony; such was his admonition and instruction. And he himself both felt and uttered these sentiments in the confidence of genuine faith.

Eusebius commented how visitors to the imperial palace noted that it seemed to resemble a church as Constantine regularly led his imperial court in communal prayers. The conviction that he had a mission to convert the empire to Christianity, the sense that time was running short to complete this task, and the contrition that he felt over the dynastic tragedy in Italy must have all contributed to the increasing religious zealotry of the emperor. In any case, the growing personal piety of Constantine affected his public religious policies during the waning years of his rule.[3]

Once when he was entertaining a gathering of bishops at a banquet, Constantine attempted to define his understanding of his mission by remarking: "While you are bishops of the things inside the Church, I too am a bishop appointed by God of the things outside of it." This enigmatic statement seems to have meant that while the Catholic bishops were ordained to oversee and direct the internal activities of the Church, the emperor as a divinely chosen *"episkopos…ton ektos"* was assigned to protect and promote the external standing of the faith. Constantine certainly fulfilled this definition of his religious mission as he focused his religious policy upon undergirding the growing strength of Christianity and upon undermining the declining status of its competitors in this period.[4]

Through his imperial power and patronage, Constantine made it clear that Catholic Christianity was the favored religion of the Roman state. His "prayer-pose" coins were minted and circulated ubiquitously across the empire, and depicted the emperor with head and eyes upraised in prayer to the God whom he declared in edicts and letters was the "one and only true Deity." Large tableaux of this motif were placed above the entry gates of palaces in which Constantine or his sons resided (Ill. 85).[5] His Sunday legislation was extended to the east after his victory over Licinius, and transformed a day for manual labor into a day for spiritual worship. The emperor indicated the kind of worship he wanted by holding Christian services in his palace, and by allowing Christian soldiers Sunday off to attend services in Catholic churches.[6] The church-building programs of Constantine were endowing the great cities of the empire with large basilicas to encourage the communal worship of the Christian Divinity. Trier, Rome, Constantinople, Nicomedia, Antioch, Jerusalem, and many other cities all had newly built or nearly

finished churches erected on the orders and out of the resources of the emperor. The Catholic bishops were following the lead of Constantine, and building Christian churches with the aid of governmental officials in towns all across the Roman world.[7]



Ill. 85 Gold medallion of CONSTANTINUS AUG with the obverse depicting him gazing heavenwards in the “prayer pose,” and the reverse showing him pushing down a captive under the inscription VIRTUS D N CONSTANTINI AUG—the “Valor of Our Lord Constantine the Augustus” (Siscia, 326–27).

While Christianity was gaining a more apparent presence in the empire, Christians were playing a more active role in the government. Eusebius noted in the *Vita Constantini* that the emperor employed many men “devoted to the saving faith” as high officials in the imperial administration. The names and careers of several Christians who served as governors of provinces, vicars of dioceses, and praetorian prefects under Constantine are known from literary references and ancient inscriptions. One of the more famous examples from later in the reign was Flavius Ablabius. He was born and raised in a humble Christian household, but received a decent classical education on the island of Crete. He began his public career as an *officialis* for a governor of Crete, and then moved to Constantinople while it was being built and Constantine was seeking residents for it in the mid-320s. He made a fortune there, and was admitted to the Senate of the new capital. He served as the Vicar over the Diocese of Asia (324–26), and went west to be a Praetorian Prefect in Italy (*ca.* 329–31). He returned to the east and served as the Praetorian Prefect of Constantine in Constantinople (*ca.* 331–35). He was given the distinction of a consulship in 331, and was reported to have wielded great influence over

the emperor. Some of the more important constitutions in the *Codex Theodosianus* and the *Constitutiones Sirmondianae* were addressed to him—including the detailed confirmation of *episcopale iudicium,* the right of Catholic bishops to accept appeals from secular courts (333). The pagan authors Eunapius and Zosimus claimed that he persuaded Constantine to condemn Sopater, the famous Neoplatonic philosopher and disciple of Iamblichus, to death for supposedly employing pagan magic to fetter the winds and delay the ships bringing grain to Constantinople (*ca.* 335).[8] There were many other Christians serving in the government of the first Christian emperor whose names were never noted in ancient literary or epigraphic documents. However, their presence can be discerned from another kind of evidence—the imperial coinage. Constantine kept a dozen mints from Trier to Alexandria running in the later years of his reign. The emperor and his top finance officials determined the obverse portraits, reverse motifs, and the accompanying inscriptions which they wanted the coins to display, and sent prototypes out to the regional mints. The *procurator monetae* in charge of each imperial mint and the *officinatores* who supervised the sections therein, however, had the freedom to choose the control marks which they used on the reverses to designate the issue within each of the coin types they minted. Often neutral marks, such as wreaths, stars, letters, etc., were employed as control marks. Occasionally Christian symbols, such as crosses and Christian monograms, were used and seem to indicate the presence of Christian officials who wished to reflect the religious policy of Constantine or to express their own faith on the coins produced in the mints that they administered. The three standard bronze coin types minted in the empire from 330 to 337 were the CONSTANTINOPOLIS type celebrating the "New Rome," an URBS ROMA type commemorating old Rome, and a GLORIA EXERCITUS type honoring the imperial army. Only the first type, which had the personification of the new Christian capital holding a cross scepter over her shoulder on the obverse, seems to have deliberately



Ill. 86 A bronze coin of Constantine displaying the bust of the emperor on the obverse, and a war standard marked with a Christogram between two soldiers on the reverse celebrating the GLORIA EXERCITUS—the "Glory of the Army" (Arles, 336).

carried Christian symbolism in its prototype design. The officials running the mint at Arles appear to have been aggressively Christian since they added Christian control marks to the basic design of all three of these coin types. Between 334 and 337, they used the Christogram (☧) or the Chi (×) as marks of issue beside the Victory figure on the reverse of the Constantinople coin type, above the wolf and twins on the reverse of the Rome coin type, and between two soldiers on the reverse of the Glory of the Army type (Ill. 86). The mint officials at Aquileia and Antioch may have also been Christian in this period, for they used a Latin cross (†) as a mark of issue on the reverse of the GLORIA EXERCITUS bronze coins of the former mint in 334, and a new type of cross monogram combining the name and cross of Christ (⳨) in the reverse field of the VICTORIA CONSTANTINI AUG gold solidi of the latter mint in 336–37. The unknown monetary procurators who chose to employ Christian symbols as control marks on the coinage produced in their mints were reflecting the conversion of Constantine, supporting his propagation of Christianity, and witnessing to the success of his mission to convert the Roman world to the Christian religion.[9]

Constantine sensed that his religious mission included not only the propagation of the Christian faith but also the protection of the Catholic Church. In fulfilling this latter part of his role, he issued laws and took actions to protect “the true Church” from dissidents and competitors. Eusebius recorded a public letter which the emperor wrote to heretics and schismatics harshly condemning them as the “enemies of truth and life” who follow “pernicious errors” which lead to “destruction.” He forbade them from worshiping in public or in private, and ordered that their communal meeting places be surrendered to the Catholic Church or be confiscated by the Roman state. He encouraged them to return from “darkness to light, from vanity to truth, from death to salvation,” and to “unite in holy fellowship” with the Catholic Church. Constantine issued a constitution to governmental officials which ordered that heretics and schismatics be deprived of the legal privileges granted to Catholics, and that they be subjected to compulsory public services. These measures did not fully eradicate dissident groups, such as the Donatists, Marcionites, Valentinians, and Paulianists, but they did hinder their growth and convert some of their members.[10]

As his comments on the Easter controversy revealed, the Christian emperor had little love for the Jews. He did allow synagogue leaders—like Christian clergy—to be exempt from compulsory public services; but he placed a number of harsh legal restrictions upon the Jewish people. They could visit Jerusalem only one day of the year—and then only to bewail their fate. They were not permitted to own Christian slaves, and were not allowed to propagandize Judaism to Christians. Jews who tried to punish Jews who converted from Judaism to Christianity were liable for capital punishment by burning. When a high official of the Jewish patriarch converted to Christianity, Constantine invited him to his court and made him a count (*ca.* 335). Count Joseph, as he was known, then went back to the Sea of Galilee region, and, backed with an imperial commission and funds, built churches in the area.[11]

Although Constantine may have never outlawed the pagan cults completely, he took actions to degrade their sites and hinder their rites in the later years of his imperial reign. He commissioned special groups of counts *(comites Augusti)* to travel through the provinces, and to despoil the heathen temples of their art and treasures. Some of the more famous statues and art pieces were dispatched to the new Christian capital, and used as

objets d'art to decorate its porticoes and public structures. Many other statues, temple doors, and roofs were melted down into ingots and employed for minting the gold, silver, and bronze coins circulated in the empire. This systematic spoilage of pagan temples greatly enriched the imperial coffers and aided the building programs of the emperor. As his missionary zeal increased, Constantine even destroyed a few of the less reputable heathen shrines, such as those for Aphrodite at Aphaca and Heliopolis in Phoenicia where ritual prostitution and homosexual activities were carried on; and that for Asclepios at Aegae in Cilicia where a pagan healing cult was centered. Cities which closed their temples voluntarily and converted to Christianity wholesale were allowed to rename themselves after the imperial family and received special imperial beneficia (e.g., Arles, Cirta, Tomi, Gaza, and others across the empire). Hispellum, on the other hand, still a largely pagan town in Umbrian Italy, which petitioned to build a temple to the Gens Flavia of Constantine, was allowed to do so only reluctantly and with the proviso that it not be "polluted by the deceits of any contagious superstition" (no sacrifices). Constantine had outlawed divination during his "cold war" with Licinius, and had forbidden sacrifices on temple altars after his victory. As his long reign wore on, it became more difficult and less acceptable to practice the ancestral rituals. Conversions of individuals, families, and even of whole communities became common in this period. The declining number of pagans in the empire were left with little more to do at their dilapidated temples than offer vows in the Christian manner of prayer. While the Christian Eusebius exaltedly praised the emperor for depriving the temples of the pagans of their wealth and for denuding the statues of the deities of their mystery, the pagan Zosimus bitterly criticized Constantine for the same actions. The different responses of these two ancient authors reflected not only their divergent religious views, but also the success of the emperor's religious policies. His extensive propagation of Christianity and his limited tolerance for paganism were transforming a pagan state into a Christian empire.[12]

The policies of Constantine which promoted Christianity and undermined its competitors were carried out continuously through the later period of his long reign. His attention to these endeavors, however, was occasionally interrupted by political conflicts in the eastern Church and by military campaigns on the Danube front during the years 330–36.

The emperor had hoped that the clerical hierarchy would unite in brotherly concord when he had departed for the west in 328. Yet, he found that the eastern episcopate was again dividing into bitter disputes when he returned to the east in 330. After the approval of the confession of Arius and Euzoius, and the restoration to their sees of Eusebius and Theognis at the "Second Session of the Council of Nicaea," Constantine had again requested that Alexander allow Arius to return to communion in Egypt. The old patriarch had again refused, and then died in April 328. His successor, the young deacon Athanasius, had been elected to replace him in June 328. By then, the emperor had departed for the west; but he had asked Eusebius of Nicomedia to press the case of Arius in Alexandria. Eusebius had dispatched messengers to Egypt with a letter and threats demanding the readmission of Arius; but Athanasius had also refused. Constantine had been informed of this, and had sent a stern letter from the west threatening Athanasius with deposition if he did not relent. Athanasius had responded with a polite missive refusing to readmit Arius and explaining that it was not right that the inventor of a heresy

contrary to the truth and that a priest anathematized by the Ecumenical Council should be restored to communion with the Catholic Church. Since his attention was focused on imperial concerns and military campaigns, Constantine had not bothered to follow up on his threat to Athanasius between late 328 and mid-330.[13]

After the dedication of Constantinople, Constantine was again forced to deal with the convoluted political disputes of the contentious eastern bishops. The church in Egypt was the primary problem, and Bishops Eusebius of Nicomedia and Athanasius of Alexandria were the principal players in the new conflicts. Eusebius was a man of political ambitions and intellectual pretensions. He had enjoyed being the bishop of a tetrarchic capital, and taking the lead in the theological debates of the Church. He had not relished the defeat of the Arian cause at Nicaea, and the exile from his episcopal see by the emperor. After his restoration in 328, he worked for the revival of his faction and the weakening of his foes. His long association with the emperor's sister Constantia, his nominal adherence to the Nicene credal formula, and his diplomatic maneuvers in support of Church unity gradually brought him closer to the emperor. Athanasius was a man of uncompromising character and intellectual rigidity. He had been the favorite deacon of Alexander, and had helped him define his theological positions during the Arian Conflict and at Nicaea. After the death of his mentor in the spring of 328, he got himself elected Bishop of Alexandria with the broad support of the populace of the city and the Catholic bishops of Egypt—but against the wishes of the Melitian bishops. His firm defense of Nicene theology would at first impress Constantine, but his unyielding refusal to readmit Arius to the Alexandrian church and rough handling of the Melitians in Egypt would later alienate the emperor.[14]

A political alliance between Eusebius of Nicomedia and the Melitians of Egypt in late 330 was the spark which once more lighted the flames of contention in the eastern Church. Eusebius had reclaimed his episcopate over a major imperial capital, he was gaining influence with the emperor, and he desired to win readmission for Arius and wreak revenge on his theological enemies—the primary one being Athanasius. The Melitians were a schismatic faction of Christians named after Melitius, a bishop in the Thebaid, who had broken away from the Catholics under Bishop Peter of Alexandria during the "Great Persecution" and had set up an alternate rigorist hierarchy through Egypt—similar to the Donatists in Africa. Since they were theologically orthodox, a process had been established at Nicaea by which they could be reintegrated into the Catholic Church. The Melitian priests and bishops were allowed to keep their titles, but could exercise the functions thereof only if there were no Catholic clergy in their cities and only if they submitted to the authority of the Bishop of Alexandria. Alexander had made some progress in bringing them back into the Church during the three years he survived after the Nicene Council. Athanasius, however, had not received support from the Melitians in his election and consecration to the Alexandrian episcopal see. He judged them to be schismatic troublemakers, and used rough tactics to intimidate their leaders and destroy their meeting places from early in his episcopal reign. They were not happy with Athanasius and their situation in the Egyptian church, and sent a delegation to the court of Constantine in the summer of 330. They found the emperor in Nicomedia, but were unable to obtain an audience. Eusebius befriended them, and offered to intercede with Constantine if they accepted the orthodoxy of Arius and supported his return to the Alexandrian church. They agreed to these terms, and allied with Eusebius against their common enemy. Eusebius was able to bring them to court shortly thereafter, and they

brought an accusation against Athanasius of forcing Egyptians to offer linen garments as tribute to the church at Alexandria. Two Athanasian priests were present at the court, refuted the charge, and convinced Constantine to dismiss the Melitians as unruly malcontents. In the autumn, however, the Melitians returned to court with more serious charges: that Athanasius had ordered his agent Macarius to overturn an altar and to destroy a chalice in a dissident church; and that the bishop had attempted to bribe the palace official Philumenus to plot against the emperor. As these charges involved sacrilege and treason, Constantine ordered Athanasius to come to the imperial court and answer the accusations. The bishop reached Constantinople sometime late in 331, acquitted himself of the charges, and impressed the emperor with his character. The favorable verdict which he received may have been aided by an unpleasant reminder of the Donatist problem which Constantine had recently endured. When traveling back to the east in the winter of 329–330, he had been informed that the basilica which he had erected for the Catholics in Constantina, the capital of Numidia formerly known as Cirta, had been seized by the Donatists, and that these dissidents had also been forcing Catholic clergy to serve on city councils and perform various *munera civilia*. Rather than using force to retake the basilica, the emperor ordered his provincial governor to construct another church for the Catholics and to enforce his laws exempting them from public services. He wrote a letter to the Catholic bishops of the province, praising their Christ-like patience in the face of the Devil-inspired ways of the Donatists, and leaving the latter to the judgment of God. Constantine may have reckoned that the Melitians of Egypt seemed to be too much like the schismatics of Africa, and may have hoped that a strong bishop might keep them in check. In any case, after interrogating and acquitting Athanasius, he sent him back to Alexandria in the spring of 332 with a public letter for the people of the city extolling their bishop as "a man of God," condemning his enemies for their perversity and madness, and counseling all to adopt the brotherly love and unity which Christ expects of his disciples.[15]

As Athanasius was returning to Alexandria, Constantine was traveling to the Danube front during the spring of 332. Gothic barbarians had been pressing Sarmatian tribes settled above the river, and the latter were imploring the imperial government for help against them. The Augustus summoned his oldest son Constantine II from Gaul, and put him in command of the campaign so he could gain experience in the field and respect from the army. The ancient sources offer few details about this operation, but were unanimous about its success. Taking advantage of unseasonably cold weather, the Caesar and his father inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Goths. The *Origo* reported that nearly 100,000 of the enemy were killed, and that hostages—including Ariaricus, the son of the Gothic king—were handed over to the Romans. Constantine added GOTHICUS MAXIMUS II to his titulature, and issued gold coins displaying figures of victory and bronze coins celebrating "the Glory of the Army."[16]

Although the eastern Church remained fairly calm on the surface during the early 330s, problems kept erupting in the Egyptian church which repeatedly tried the patience of the emperor. While Constantine was fighting on the Danube front, Arius had returned to Alexandria, and sought readmission to the church there. Athanasius had refused to readmit him to communion, had rejected his latest theological statement as heretical, and had excommunicated him again. Having waited five years since his theological rehabilitation in Bithynia, Arius responded angrily to this, and wrote a letter to the

emperor threatening to set up a separate church if he was not allowed back into communion in Alexandria. Athanasius seems to have forwarded a dossier to Constantine justifying his refusal to readmit Arius and attacking his theology. The emperor concluded that Arius had again become an agent of the Devil, and was denigrating the Divinity of Christ and undermining the unity of the Church. Early in the year 333, he dispatched two harsh epistles to Egypt. The first one was addressed to the bishops and laity, and declared that Arius and his supporters were like the great enemy of Christianity Porphyry, and that they should thus be called Porphyrians and their impious works should be consigned to flames in order to save the faithful from falsehood. The second one was addressed to Arius and Arians, and offered a detailed critique of Arian theology and an acerbic attack on Arius' character. Constantine accused Arius of dividing the single essence *(ousia)* of the Godhead by maintaining that Christ had a separate subsistence *(hypostasis)* from the Father; and he ridiculed the emaciated physical appearance of Arius as the outward sign of his inward corruption. He threatened to oppress the followers of Arius with a tenfold capitation tax and to impose upon Arian clergy the burden of public *munera*. He ended by inviting Arius to come to the imperial court in order that he as "the man of God" might attempt to heal him of his diabolical madness and restore him to divine grace.[17]

The Melitians had remained quiet for a couple of years after their initial defeats at the imperial court. However, they again leveled charges against Athanasius in the winter of 333–34. They raised the old accusation that his priest Macarius had invaded a church in the Mareotis district, and had overturned an altar and broken the sacred chalice used for communion there by a priest named Ischyras. They added a new and more serious accusation that Athanasius had murdered a Melitian bishop named Arsenius in the town of Hypsele, and they displayed a severed hand to supposedly prove that they had seen the corpse of the dead man. Ischyras had not been a priest of either the Catholics or the Melitians, but for a short time seems to have offered services in his house as a presbyter for the schismatic bishop Colluthus. He had been warned by the agents of Athanasius to stop holding services. Eusebius of Nicomedia and his Melitian allies in Egypt seem to have offered to make him a priest if he alleged violence against the regime of Athanasius. He had played along with this back in 330–31. Yet, the supporters of Athanasius now persuaded Ischyras to write a letter witnessed by thirteen Catholic clergymen that no violence had been used against him, and that no altar had been overturned nor any chalice broken; but, rather, that he had been compelled by force from the Melitians to assert these things. Upon receiving this letter, Athanasius quickly sent it to the emperor, who dismissed this charge, which he had judged before as false. The murder charge was another matter, particularly since no one had seen Arsenius for some time. Constantine decided to convene a council of eastern bishops to deal with the issue. He instructed the bishops to meet in Palestine in the spring of 334, and commissioned his half-brother Dalmatius, who was then governing the Oriens Diocese with the title of *Censor,* to represent him at the *Council of Caesarea*. Many of the old foes of Athanasius, such as Eusebius of Nicomedia, Theognis of Nicaea, and Eusebius of Caesarea, attended the council in the hope of deposing their nemesis from Alexandria. Knowing that he had been falsely accused and could not expect a fair hearing, Athanasius did not journey to Caesarea. The bishops condemned him *in absentia* of violence in the administration of his see and of contumacy for his failure to appear before a council of the Church, and communicated their judgments to the emperor. Athanasius, in the meantime, had been

gathering information to refute his accusers. He sent agents all over Egypt in a search for the missing Arsenius. Proof was found that the latter had been hiding in a monastery in southern Egypt, and had then fled to Tyre. Paul, the Bishop of Tyre and an ally of Athanasius, recognized the supposedly dead man, and got a court decision confirming that he was alive and well. Athanasius forwarded a dossier to Constantine with the evidence disproving the charge of murder and reminding him that he had already been cleared of the broken chalice accusation. The emperor dissolved the council, annulled its verdicts, and ordered the bishops to return to their sees. He then dispatched an epistle to Athanasius, confirming his innocence on both the chalice and murder charges, condemning the "perverse and ungodly Melitians" for their fabricated accusations and unreasonable commotions, and counseling the bishop to cultivate truth and tranquillity in the church in Egypt—and instructing him to have the letter read publicly. The vote of confidence which Constantine gave to Athanasius convinced both Arsenius and John Archaph (the leader of the Melitians since Melitius' demise a few years earlier) to write letters of apology and submission to Athanasius. Thus, by the summer of 334, the emperor and the Alexandrian bishop could hope that peace was possible in the eastern Church.[18]

Constantine was then able to travel to the Danube front where a problem with the Sarmatians required his attention. When attempting to resist Gothic pressure two years earlier, the Sarmatians had armed their slaves to help them fight the enemy. Yet, after Constantine had intervened and defeated



Ill. 87 Gold solidus depicting Constantine gazing upwards in the "prayer pose" on the obverse, and showing a seated figure of Victory celebrating the VICTORIA CONSTANTINI AUG on the reverse (Nicomedia, 335).

the Goths, the subject peoples had rebelled against their Sarmatian masters and driven them toward the Roman frontier. The Sarmatians again appealed to the emperor for assistance. He responded to their request, inflicted a defeat upon their enemies, the

Limigantes, and then transferred the majority of the Sarmatians into Roman territory. He selected some of their best fighting men, and enrolled them in divisions of his army along the frontiers; and settled the rest of them as farmers on deserted or inadequately cultivated lands in provinces through Thrace, Macedonia, and Italy. The usually reliable *Origo Constantini* reported that more than 300,000 new people were brought into the empire by this operation. It helped replenish depleted garrisons along the frontiers, and added tax-paying farmers to little-populated regions of the empire. Constantine was able to add SARMATICUS MAXIMUS II to the list of his victory titles at the end of 334, and continued to issue coin motifs celebrating the victories of his dynasty and the glory of his armies (Ill. 87).[19]

As the emperor returned to Constantinople early in 335, he heard that the construction of the Holy Sepulchre complex in Jerusalem was nearly completed, and he began to plan for its dedication during his upcoming Tricennalia celebrations. Unfortunately, his joyful anticipation of this milestone was soon disturbed by news of renewed contention in Egypt. While Constantine had been dealing with the Sarmatian problem on the Danube frontier, Eusebius of Nicomedia had persuaded the partisans of Melitius, Colluthus, and Arius to send a letter to the emperor complaining about the conduct of Athanasius. The old charge that he had ordered the chalice of Ischyras to be smashed was raised again, and several new charges that he was employing coercion and violence against his opponents were added to it. Constantine was losing patience with this situation, and decided to summon the eastern episcopate to a synod on the Phoenician coast to deal with it. He dispatched Flavius Dionysius, a count and former governor of Syria, to supervise the proceedings and preserve order at the council, and he urged the bishops to end dissension and restore peace in the Church so that they would be worthy to participate in the dedications of the sacred edifices at Jerusalem.[20]

Over a hundred bishops from the great arc of provinces encircling the eastern Mediterranean Basin journeyed to the *Council of Tyre* during the summer of 335. Athanasius, after attempting to silence the opposition to his rule in Egypt, reluctantly arrived in July with a phalanx of bishops loyal to himself. Yet, his enemies were in the majority at Tyre. They assailed the Bishop of Alexandria with several charges which seemed to prove that he was unfit to hold his office. Ischyras renewed his accusation that Athanasius had ordered a chalice to be broken in his church, and had arranged for him to be assaulted and jailed several times. Callinicus, a former Catholic bishop, supported the stories of Ischyras, and told how Athanasius had also ordered him to be deposed, arrested, and tortured. Five Melitian bishops complained of violence used against their persons when they had questioned the legitimacy of Athanasius' election. Others defended the earlier accusation concerning Arsenius since they knew that Plusianus, a supporter of Athanasius, had burned down the house of Arsenius and confined him to a hut before he had disappeared—thus giving rise to their suspicion of murder. Athanasius denied the charges, and his supporters disrupted the council. With this stalemate, the bishops petitioned the count to allow them to send a commission of inquiry to Egypt to gather evidence on site. Dionysius agreed, but—ignoring his advice to be impartial—the majority chose only enemies of Athanasius to serve on it: Theognis of Nicaea, Maris of Chalcedon, Theodorus of Heraclea, Macedonius of Mopsuestia, Ursacius of Singidunum, and Valens of Mursa. The commission, with Ischyras as a guide, traveled to Egypt in late August. Meanwhile, Athanasius protested to Dionysius that he was being "wronged and

framed." The Egyptian bishops supporting him at Tyre drafted letters to the count and to the council denouncing the enmity of Eusebius and his allies, protesting the unfairness of the process, and defending the integrity of their bishop. They also submitted an appeal to Dionysius that the final judgment of their affairs be reserved for "the most religious and God-beloved Emperor Constantine."[21]

While the bishops at Tyre were waiting for the return of the commission of inquiry sent to Egypt, they received a message from the Augustus directing them to go to Jerusalem to carry out the dedication of the Holy Sepulchre complex. Eusebius of Caesarea, who was playing a prominent role at the Phoenician council, was among the bishops who journeyed to Jerusalem and participated in the *Encaenia* ("Festival of Dedication") held from 13 to 20 September. He reported that Constantine sent Marianus, a famous Christian confessor and *notarius* from his court, to oversee the ceremonies. The city was thronged with distinguished clergy from many provinces of the empire, and the imperial official received them with noble benevolence and entertained them with lavish banquets. He endowed the poor with gifts of money, food and clothing, and he adorned the holy places with magnificent decorations. The leading bishops presided over worship services in the sacred edifices, and offered prayers for the peace of the world, for the Church of God, and for the Christian rulers. Eusebius himself gave a formal discourse upon the physical structure and the spiritual symbolism of the complex. Later in the year, he delivered this *Oratio de Sepulchro Christi* before Constantine in Constantinople. Athanasius did not go to Jerusalem for the Encaenia; but his old enemy Arius did. Arius had accepted the invitation of Constantine to come to his court after their falling out in 333; and, with the help of Eusebius of Nicomedia and his friends, had convinced the emperor once again that he held theological views compatible with the Nicene credal formula. Constantine thus dispatched him to Jerusalem in 335 with a letter vouching for his faith and requesting that he be examined, and, if found orthodox, be readmited to the Church so that the servants of God might be reunited in harmony and fellowship. After the dedication ceremonies, the bishops convened the *Council of Jerusalem,* examined Arius and his statement of belief, and formally voted to readmit him and his allies to the Catholic Church. They communicated their conciliar action in epistles sent to the emperor, and to the churches in the provinces throughout greater Egypt and Libya.[22]

In late September, the bishops reconvened at Tyre to receive the report of the commission of inquiry which had returned from Egypt to Palestine during the festival of the Encaenia. The commission had been protected by the prefect Philagrius and a military escort against the protests and obstruction of the followers of Athanasius. It had forced compliant witnesses to support the accusation of an attack against the "church" of Ischyras by an agent of the bishop. Although the Catholic clergy of Alexandria and the Mareotis district protested its actions and refuted its findings, the commission reported to the Council of Tyre that Athanasius was guilty of using violence against his opponents in Egypt. Athanasius and most of his supporters had already left Tyre. The majority of the remaining bishops voted to condemn and depose him on four counts: (1) that he had ordered the attack on Ischyras and the breaking of his sacred chalice; (2) that he had refused to attend the Council of Caesarea; (3) that he and his followers had disrupted the Council of Tyre; and (4) that his flight from Tyre proved his guilt. The council also received John Archaph and his Melitians into communion, and appointed the Arian Pistus as the next Bishop of Alexandria. The members of the council composed a circular letter

to be sent to the other bishops throughout the empire, announcing their decisions and admonishing their counterparts not to communicate with Athanasius. They completed their business by writing an account of their actions to Constantine, and by electing six of their number to take it to the emperor in Constantinople.[23]

The bishops at Tyre decided to send a delegation to the new capital because they realized that Athanasius was on his way there to appeal to Constantine over their heads. Knowing that the odds were against him in Phoenicia, Athanasius had left the council about the time the bishops had departed for Jerusalem. Initially, his enemies had not been alarmed since they assumed that he had returned to Egypt. Yet, when their assumption proved false, they reasoned that they must send a delegation to defend their conciliar actions to the emperor. It was later learned that Athanasius had eluded the guards in the harbor at Tyre, had fled by cover of night from the city on a small, open boat, and had sailed north to Tarsus. He had then spent a month taking the long and arduous land route across Anatolia, and arrived in Constantinople on 30 October 335. In a disheveled and pitiable state, he accosted Constantine as he was riding back into his eponymous city on horseback. The emperor did not immediately recognize the man calling out for his compassion; but when his companions told him that it was Athanasius, Constantine granted his request that he be allowed to defend himself in the imperial palace in the presence of his accusers. In order not to prejudice the hearing, however, the emperor refused to meet with the beleaguered bishop before his opponents could travel to the capital. Having only heard rumors about the raucous sessions at Tyre, and not aware of the final actions of the council, he sent a strongly worded letter to the bishops, ordering them to come to Constantinople and to render an account of their proceedings. "The Epistle of Constantine, the Victor and Maximus Augustus, to the Bishops Assembled at Tyre" is an interesting document, and reveals that the emperor had lost all patience with the constant bickering of the eastern bishops. He complained that their mutual contentiousness was displeasing to God, and that their disorderly tumults were harming the Church. He pointed out that peace was spreading everywhere, and that even the barbarians were turning to the true faith because of his pious works in honor of the Deity; but that their dissensions and hatreds were undermining his efforts and could lead to the destruction of humanity. He threatened to use all his power to amend what was amiss and to bring concord to the Church. As the Council of Tyre had already dispersed, this letter may not have reached all of its participants. Yet, when Eusebius of Nicomedia, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the four other bishops who had been sent as the delegates from Phoenicia via the shorter and easier sea route around Asia Minor arrived in Constantinople a few days after Athanasius, they were certainly made aware of it and of the testy mood of Constantine. They swifty realized that a mere defense of the decisions of the Council of Tyre would not be satisfactory in a hearing before the angry emperor.[24]

On 6 November, Eusebius of Nicomedia with five eastern bishops representing the majority at Tyre and Athanasius of Alexandria with five Egyptian bishops supporting his cause appeared before Constantine in his palace at Constantinople. Eusebius recognized how sincerely the emperor desired unity and concord among the Christian clergy, and how greatly he wanted peace and prosperity in his new Christian capital. He had been urging the bishops to cultivate mutual harmony for more than a decade, and he had recently had the Neoplatonic philosopher Sopater put to death for supposedly "fettering the winds" to delay the grain shipments to Constantinople.

Eusebius thus put aside the old charges against Athanasius, and struck with two accusations which he knew would inflame Constantine: (1) he asserted that Athanasius had obstinately refused to readmit Arius to communion in Egypt against the wishes of the emperor and the decisions of councils, and thus was guilty of obstructing the unity of the Church; and (2) that Athanasius had threatened to block the shipments of grain from Alexandria which were needed to feed the people of Constantinople, and thus was guilty of endangering the peace of the capital. Constantine confronted Athanasius with these charges, and a heated argument followed between the emperor and the patriarch. Athanasius became angry, quoted scripture, and threatened that God would judge between them. Constantine lost his temper, invoked his power, and decreed exile to Trier for the obstuctionist cleric. The Augustus was sure that Athanasius was orthodox in his theology, and therefore did not depose him from his episcopal rank; but, he was not sure that the bishop was ethical in his treatment of fellow Christians, and therefore judged that a temporary exile might encourage him to amend his contumacious ways. Athanasius departed Constantinople on 7 November, and would spend the next two years in exile before he was allowed to return to Alexandria. Commentators ancient and modern have seen the exile of Athanasius as a sign that Constantine was changing his ecclesiastical policy to favor the Arians late in his reign. This was not so. He had simply lost patience with the incessant turmoil in the Egyptian church. Thus, he exiled Athanasius as the Catholic leader who refused to make peace with Arius and the Melitians; but he also exiled John Archaph as the Melitian leader who kept making disturbances against Athanasius and the Catholics. And since his action in Constantinople basically annulled the decisions of Tyre, Pistus the Arian was never allowed to replace Athanasius as the Bishop of Alexandria. If Eusebius and his allies gained the favor of the emperor in his later years, it was because they had learned the lessons of Nicaea better than their enemies. The internal ecclesiastical policy of Constantine remained consistent to the end: he demanded both theological orthodoxy and brotherly harmony from the Christian clergy.[25]

The presence of Eusebius of Caesarea in the delegation from Tyre and his support for the accusations of Eusebius of Nicomedia against Athanasius may have helped sway the mind of Constantine against the Alexandrian patriarch. Eusebius had been steadily earning the respect of the emperor since his conquest of the east. The Caesarean bishop had persuaded Arius to moderate some of his more radical positions, he had aided Constantine in swaying supporters of Arius to accept the Nicene Creed, he had assisted the Empress Helena on her pilgrimage in the Holy Land, and he had graciously followed the wishes of the emperor not to move to the see of Antioch.

Eusebius seemed to be just the kind of bishop Constantine appreciated—a moderate Christian theologian and a loving episcopal administrator who fully supported the emperor's goals of unifying the Church and Christianizing the empire. Constantine knew that Eusebius was the greatest scholar in the eastern Church, and came to rely on him more and more to support his Christianizing mission in his later years. When the population of Constantinople quickly expanded after the dedication of the city and the emperor wished to construct new parish churches for worship services, he turned to the Palestinian scholar for help. He commissioned him to oversee the production of fifty beautiful lectionary Bibles in the research library at Caesarea which were to be used in the churches of the new eastern capital. Eusebius completed this commission efficiently

and dispatched the elegant scriptures to Constantinople swiftly. He also assisted Constantine in his studies on Christianity by sending him treatises on the mysteries of the faith—the emperor carefully read a tract about Easter he had received from Eusebius, and responded to the bishop with a letter of fulsome praise for his knowledge and kindness. Thus, when the contentious business concerning Athanasius was completed, it was Eusebius who was selected to present an *Oratio de Sepulchro Christi* celebrating the recent dedication of the Holy Sepulchre complex in Jerusalem before Constantine in the imperial palace at Constantinople. The emperor stood throughout the long speech in honor of its sacred subject matter, and expressed his agreement with its contents and his pleasure with its delivery. It was probably this presentation which convinced Constantine to commission Eusebius to compose the official panegyrical oration for the end of the Tricennalia celebrations the following summer.[26]

Yet, before the tricennial year reached its conclusion in July 336, the emperor was planning to carry out what would be his last major military campaign—an expansion of Roman territory above the lower Danube River. This was the region Trajan had conquered in the early second century, and from which Aurelian had withdrawn in the late third century. Diocletian and Gaierius (with a young Constantine in their armies) had campaigned along the Danube and stabilized the area beneath it in the early fourth century. Constantine now wanted to reconquer parts of the lost region of *Dacia* above the river, and live up to the favorable comparisons which had long been made between the great Trajan and himself. In recent campaigns, he had fortified both banks of the river, driven the Goths north, and withdrawn the Sarmatians south. Over the winter of 335–36, he planned his strategy and put his forces in place for a final push into territory above the river. In the spring, he led his armies above the arc of the lower Danube, defeated many of the Gothic tribes, and reestablished a Roman province in the region. This *victoria gloriosior*—as the fourth-century historian Festus labeled it—allowed Constantine to add the title DACICUS MAXIMUS to his victory titulature, and to issue coins celebrating the VICTORIA AUG (“Victory of the Augustus”), and advertising himself as the VICTOR OMNIUM GENTIUM (“Victor over All the Nations”) as the thirtieth anniversary of his rule in the Roman Empire was nearing its climax in the summer of 336.[27]

When the emperor was expanding imperial territory above the Danube, the bishops were engaging in a final theological struggle. Marcellus, the Bishop of Ancyra for over twenty years and a firm adherent of the homoousian tenet of the Nicene Creed, had been unhappy with the rehabilitation of Arius at Jerusalem and the condemnation of Athanasius at Tyre. He had opposed both actions, and returned to his see in Galatia determined to expose the errors of his episcopal colleagues. In the heat of anger, he composed a theological tract defending his decision not to commune with Arius, and attacking many of his fellow eastern clergy as heretics or polytheists for supposedly positing separate *hypostases* for the Father and the Son within the Christian Trinity. He made three mistakes: (1) he so overemphasized the single essence of the Divinity that he allowed no distinction between the persons within it, and thus seemed guilty of espousing the third-century modalistic monarchian heresy of Sabellius; (2) he so savagely attacked Eusebius of Nicomedia and Eusebius of Caesarea and their friends that he appeared unchristian in temperament, and thus seemed guilty of lacking the ethic of brotherly love revered by the emperor; and (3) he sent this choleric tome to Constantine. The Augustus had been studying Christian theology for two dozen years and felt that he had a personal

relationship with Christ; he easily saw the problems in the extreme monarchianism of Marcellus. He had also come to respect the intelligence and grace of the Eusebii; he clearly disapproved of the intemperance of the Anatolian bishop. He therefore charged the bishops who arrived in Constantinople early in the summer of 336 for the imperial festivities to convene a synod, and to put an end to the theological bickering in the Church. The *Council of Constantinople* condemned and deposed Marcellus for espousing the Sabellian heresy and for refusing to commune with Arius. Constantine accepted these conciliar acts, and enforced them by sending Marcellus off to exile in the west.[28] Eusebius of Nicomedia and his allies decided that this council provided an opportune moment to finally settle the status of their old friend Arius. The latter had gone back to Alexandria after the Council of Jerusalem, but he had been refused communion there by bishops loyal to Athanasius. When the emperor had exiled the leaders of the dissident factions in Egypt a few months later, he had instructed Arius to return to his court in Constantinople. Eusebius asked Constantine if Arius could be examined a final time by the Constantinopolitan council, and, if found orthodox, be admitted into communion with the church of the new capital. The Augustus agreed. Constantine and the bishops examined Arius again, and he swore an oath that he accepted the Nicene definition of Christ. Satisfied that he was sincere, the emperor and Eusebius requested that Alexander, the Bishop of Constantinople, receive Arius into communion in the Church of Hagia Eirene the following Sunday morning. Alexander was a firm supporter of the homoousian doctrine and a strong opponent of Arian theology, and he did not trust the former heretic. He dreaded the thought that he might have to admit "the inventor of heresy" into communion in his own cathedral. Thus, he spent a long night of praying in the sacristy of his church that God might somehow prevent this blasphemy from happening. On Sunday morning as Arius, Eusebius, and their friends were walking down to the church, Arius was stricken with severe abdominal pains. He retreated to a public latrine near the Forum of Constantine to relieve himself. While therein, his bowels ruptured and hemorrhaged, and he died. When he did not reappear after some time, his friends went inside to check on him. They found him sprawled on the floor in front of the toilet seat in a puddle of his own excrement and intestines. The dramatic demise of Arius was a terrible embarrassment to his supporters. They quickly interred his body and quietly buried his memory. Yet, they could not hide the story of his dreadful death. Constantine was informed, and appears to have concluded that Arius had been guilty of perjury, and God had punished him suitably. Athanasius learned of it in exile, and later compared the death of Arius to the death of Judas Iscariot (Ac 1. 18). Eusebius of Caesarea left it out of his *Vita Constantini,* but Socrates and Sozomenus recorded it at length in their *Historiae Ecclesiasticae*. Whatever the truth of its details, the story of the demise of Arius brought a swift end to the bickering of the Christian bishops, and gave Constantine a time of ecclesiastical peace in the last year of his reign. When theological dissensions began again after the death of the emperor, no factions wanted to claim the label Arian.[29]

While Constantine was actively promoting Christianity, and alternately judging ecclesiastical conflicts and waging military campaigns, he was also establishing his succession plan and installing his chosen heirs in regional capitals across the Roman Empire during the last years of his reign. He liked the concept of a tetrarchy, but felt that it could work best within a dynastic arrangement. His attempt to set up a dynastic tetrarchy with Licinius had failed because of their political rivalries and religious

differences; and his hopes to establish one with his four sons had been dashed by the scheming of Fausta and the death of Crispus. His final plan included his three sons from Fausta, and a nephew from one of his half-brothers. Constantine II (born in 316) had been named a Caesar in March 317, and installed at Trier in 328. Constantius II (born in 317) had been designated a Caesar in November 324, and was set up at Antioch in 335. Constans (born in 320 or 323) was named a Caesar in December 333, and was installed at Milan in 335. Eusebius related that Constantine carefully educated each of his sons in the Christian religion, and thoroughly trained each of them for imperial rule. He had been delighted that his half-brothers and half-sisters from the second marriage of Constantius to Theodora had likewise followed him into Christianity. He had overseen their upbringing after the death of his father, and they remained loyal to him through the course of his reign. He had married his oldest sister Constantia to Licinius, and following the civil war allowed her to reside at his court and help raise his children until her death in 330. He had married his younger sisters Anastasia and Eutropia to men of the Roman nobility, and they provided a dynastic presence in Rome after he had established his capital at Constantinople. Out of respect for the feelings of Helena, Constantine had sent his half-brothers to live and study in provincial towns while they were growing up (one brother, Hannibalianus, did not survive to manhood). But, upon the death of his mother, he brought them to his court, gave them elevated titles, and used them in his government. He appointed Dalmatius consul in 333, and had him administer the *Oriens Diocese* with the title of censor for a couple of years. Dalmatius oversaw the Council of Caesarea, and captured and put to death the rebel Calocaerus, who led a revolt against Constantine on Cyprus (*ca.* 335). He named his youngest brother Constantius consul and *patricius* in 335, and may have given him some judicial duties in Constantinople. Constantine never considered using his brothers as imperial successors—they might endanger the rule of his sons. However, due to his need for a fourth heir in a dynastic tetrarchy, and because of his gratitude to the loyal service of his brother Dalmatius, the latter’s son and his nephew, Dalmatius junior, was designated a Caesar, and set up at Naissus in 335. Constantine’s succession plan was thus a *Christian dynastic tetrarchy* composed of his three sons from Fausta and of a nephew from his brother Dalmatius. It retained the political and administrative divisions of Diocletian, but attempted to strengthen them by religious and family bonds. By the beginning of his tricennial year, Constantine had placed each of his chosen successors out in regional capitals, and had assigned them trusted Praetorian Prefects and military officers to assist them in overseeing their portions of the empire. *Constantinus II* governed the Dioceses of Britanniae, Galliae, Viennensis, and Hispaniae in the west; *Constantius II* ruled the Dioceses of Asiana, Pontica, and Oriens in the east (Ill. 88); *Constans* governed the Dioceses of Italia, Africa, and Pannoniae in the center of the empire; and the nephew *Dalmatius* ruled the Dioceses of Moesiae and Thracia in eastern Europe. Constantine, of course, retained overall control while he remained alive; but he seems to have expected that his two older sons would become Augusti while his younger son and nephew would remain *Caesares* after his death. In order to undergird his plan, he linked his children with those of his brothers in marriage. In the summer of 335, he married his daughter Constantina to the other son of his brother Dalmatius, Hannibalianus, and designated the latter to be the future King of Armenia and the Pontic regions; and in the summer of 336, he married his son Constantius II to a daughter of his

brother Constantius. The final plan of Constantine for his imperial succession, therefore, was



Ill. 88 A billon coin of Constantius II, the longest surviving son of Constantine (337–61), with his bust and titles on the obverse, and the emperor standing over captives and holding a Christian war standard under the inscription FEL TEMP REPARATIO on the reverse (348–50).

comprehensive in its political disposition and very generous in its dynastic inclusiveness (Map 7).[30]

In July 336, Constantine celebrated a magnificent conclusion to the *Tricennalia* festivities for the thirtieth anniversary of his imperial acclamation in the new eastern capital of Constantinople. No princeps since Augustus had reigned so long within the Roman Empire. Leading officials of the civil administration, of the military hierarchy, and of the Christian Church came from all over imperial lands to salute their leader and honor his achievements. Ambassadors from northern barbarian tribes, from eastern Indian states, and from southern African nations came from far outside the imperial frontiers to bring gifts and offer obeisance to the most famous ruler of his time. Eusebius of Caesarea marveled at the number of dignitaries and at the crowds of people who traveled to Constantinople for this exceptional celebration. Parades were held in the streets, races were staged in the Hippodrome, and receptions and banquets were offered in the palace in the days surrounding the imperial anniversary.[31] A highlight of the festivities was the panegyrical oration in honor of the emperor given by a renowned scholar of the day. Eusebius of Caesarea had so impressed Constantine with his learning and eloquence over the past few years that he was given the coveted role of presenting the tricennial speech. On 25 July 336, Eusebius arose in the palace audience hall before the emperor and his special guests and delivered the *Oratio de Laudibus Constantini*. In the prologue, he noted that while other orators had eulogized Constantine for his secular achievements, he

would praise him for his heavenly virtues and his pious actions.[32] In the first section of the oration, Eusebius posited that the source of imperial power was from above—the "Highest, Greatest, Most Mighty One, the Divine Majesty," and



Map 7 The succession plan of Constantine (*ca.* 335–37).

his "only begotten, pre-existent Word," "the Light" which illuminates all creation. Since he was the first emperor to recognize the one, true, and almighty God, Constantine did not pollute his anniversaries with the foul offerings of animal sacrifices, but rather tendered a soul purified from falsehood and a "mind fitted for serving God" when he gave thanks for his many blessings and achievements. The emperor was the "friend" and "interpreter of the Word of God," and directed his gaze upwards to gain inspiration for framing his earthly government in conformity to the pattern of the celestial realm. As there was one harmonious heavenly kingdom ruled by the divine monarchy above, Constantine was creating one peaceful earthly empire governed by a Christian dynasty below. The emerging Christian empire would thus be a terrestrial *mimema* of the celestial commonwealth.[33] In the second half of the panegyric, Eusebius proclaimed that the Supreme Deity had ordained Constantine to be his "invincible champion" and "minister of his heaven-sent vengeance." He labeled the Augustus a "servant of God," and the "delegate of the Supreme Sovereign," whose divinely assigned task was to end the age of persecution and to begin the destruction of polytheism. The "Word of God" and "Sun of Righteousness" had fortified Constantine for this mission by revealing unto him his powerful "symbol of salvation." By the efficacy of "this victorious trophy," the emperor had been shielded from all harm and had been assured of victories over his wicked foes

and the demons which they served. In accord with Divine Will, he was demolishing impure shrines of superstition that lead to damnation and replacing them with beautiful churches of sunshine which lead to salvation. At the end, he declared that as an “interpreter of the Almighty God” Constantine was proclaiming the Supreme Ruler of the universe to the diverse peoples of the world and that he was connecting the heavenly Father with his earthly children.[34] This *Tricennalia Oration* by the Catholic bishop must have been delightful to the ears of the Christian emperor. For by combining Pauline theory, Lactantian polemic, and Hellenistic philosophy, Eusebius was able to elucidate the conviction which Constantine had long held that he was a special agent of the Christian Deity and that he had a religious mission to convert the Roman Empire. In so doing, Eusebius laid the foundations for the concept of Christian imperial theocracy which would dominate the political thought of the Byzantine east and of the European west for more than a millennium.[35]

XI
THE THIRTEENTH APOSTLE AND THE CHRISTIAN EMPIRE

> Constantine…died in the sixty-fifth year of his life, and in the thirty-first year of his reign… Constantius…deposited …the royal remains in the tomb which had been constructed by order of the deceased in the Church of the Apostles.
>
> Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* II. 34

Constantine was probably not aware of it at the time, but he had less than a year left in his eventful life when the festival for the thirtieth anniversary of his imperial accession came to a close in July 336. Intellectually acute and physically active to the end, the emperor spent his last ten months increasing his pious adherence to the Catholic faith, completing a magnificent monument for his Christian burial, and planning a military campaign against the Persian Empire. He would not be able to carry out his plans for the latter enterprise as a serious illness came upon him in the following spring. Realizing that he could not recover, he underwent the cleansing of Christian baptism and departed his mortal life on Pentecost of 337.[1]

Constantine had been so pleased with the panegyrical oration which Eusebius delivered at the tricennial festival that he granted the wish of the Caesarean bishop to remain at court for several months and gather material for a full biography of his pious actions and achievements. Many of the details concerning the daily routine and personal habits of Constantine which are found in the *Vita Constantini* probably came from this long sojourn of Eusebius in Constantinople.[2] He reported that the emperor remained busy to the end of his days dealing with political and military issues; but that he also "continued to compose discourses on various subjects, to deliver frequent orations in public, and to instruct his listeners in the sacred doctrines of religion." He found a copy of one of the imperial speeches in the palace archives, and had it attached to the *Vita* as an example of the kind of thinking and speaking of which the emperor was capable. It is known as the *Oratio ad Coetum Sanctorum* ("Oration to the Assembly of Saints"), and reveals much about the religious beliefs held and the sense of mission felt by Constantine.[3] It was delivered before a Christian gathering in an eastern city on some Good Friday following the defeat of Licinius. After a short prologue previewing the subject matter and requesting a kindly hearing, the oration was divided into three parts. In the first section, Constantine expounded on the verity of Christian theology versus the falsity of pagan idolatry. He declaimed that the universal system of nature and the sound reasoning of wisdom proved that there was only one God and his Word who created the cosmos and implanted order within it. He opined that the musings of philosophers and the

fictions of poets had long kept humans in darkness. In the second section, he focused on the incarnation of the Lord, and the path to the light. He explained the mission of Christ and the work of the Apostles to direct humanity away from the ignorance of idol superstition and to the knowledge of the Supreme Father. He noted that the ruins of Memphis in Egypt and of Babylon in Persia witnessed to the folly of the past. And he explicated how not only the sacred writings of Moses and the Jewish prophets, but even the sayings of the Erythraean Sibyl and an eclogue of the poet Vergil foretold the coming of the Christ. In the third section, the emperor analyzed recent imperial history to prove that advocacy of paganism led to defeat and destruction while adherence to Christianity led to victory and salvation. He criticized the false rites and cruel deeds of his tyrannical predecessors, and reviewed their terrible ends. He claimed that his true faith and pious actions came from the inspiration of Heaven. In the epilogue, Constantine declared "that the holy service in which these hands have been employed has originated in pure and genuine faith towards God"; and urged his hearers "to render thanks to the Savior of all, first for our own individual security, and then for the happy state of public affairs." Constantine had drawn upon his readings in the Bible, his studies in classical literature and in Christian apologetics, and his reflections on history to compose such a detailed tract on his religious convictions. If his words were not as eloquent as those of Cicero and his thoughts not as profound as those of Aurelius, nevertheless, Eusebius was right in maintaining that the first Christian emperor could "sustain the part of a philosopher" in his public orations.[4]

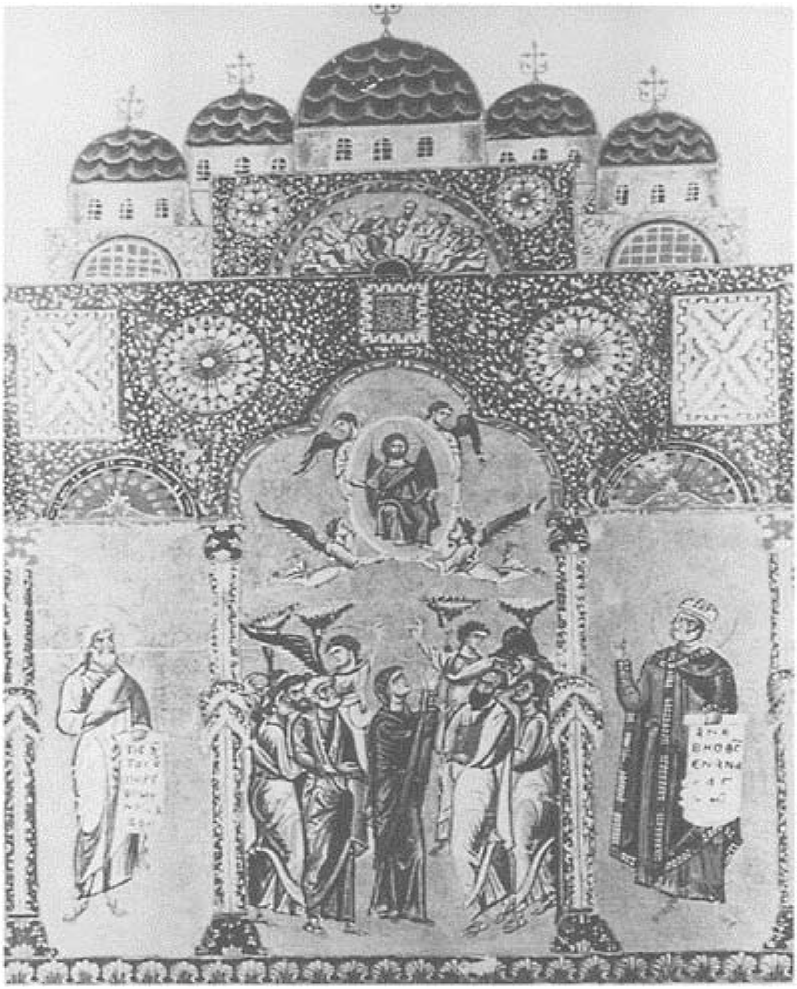
In his "Good Friday Sermon," Constantine had noted that the Apostles were "the best men of their age," and that the Savior had commanded them to spread the Gospel and to teach the way of righteousness to humanity. The emperor had early developed a sense of personal mission that he had likewise received a divine commission to continue the work which the apostolic band had initiated. Since his conversion in 312, Constantine had come a long way to fulfilling the apostolic goal of converting the Roman world to belief in Christ. As he neared the end of his life, he oversaw the completion of a great monument in Constantinople which he hoped would more closely identify him with the special servants of the Lord. It was a church which he had ordered to be built in honor of the Holy Apostles *(Hagioi Apostoloi)* on top of the highest hill in his new eastern capital city. Eusebius was able to inspect it during the winter of 336–37, and described its beauty and purpose in the *Vita Constantini*. He recorded that it was "constructed to a vast height," and was "brilliantly decorated…from the foundations to the roof with marble slabs of various colors." The floor plan seems to have been based upon a Greek cross with equidistant nave and transept arms transecting each other in the middle of the church, and a dome rising above the central crossing—an early version of the later Byzantine cross-in-square plan. The ceilings of the sanctuary were coffered and gilded with gold, while the interior of the dome was leveled and adorned with mosaics. The pitched roofs and conical dome covering were sheathed with brass tiles adorned with gold tracery which "reflected the rays of the sun with a brilliant glow which dazzled the beholder." The church was set in the midst of a large open plaza and was surrounded by elaborate porticoed colonnades. It dominated the upper skyline of Constantinople, and could be seen from a distance by travelers approaching the capital either by sea or by land. Eusebius reported that the emperor dedicated this complex "with the desire of

perpetuating the memory of the Apostles of our Savior." However, he commented that Constantine had another object in erecting this church:

> He had in fact chosen this site in the prospect of his own death, anticipating with an extraordinary fervor of faith that his body would share their title with the Apostles themselves, and that he should thus even after death become the subject with them of the devotions which should be performed in their honor at this place. He accordingly ordered that twelve cenotaphs be set up as sacred pillars in honor and memory of the apostolic number, and that his own sarcophagus be placed in the center of these…. Thus,…with prudent foresight he had provided an honorable resting place for his body after his death, and, having long before secretly formed this design, he now dedicated this church to the Apostles, believing that this tribute to their memory would be of no small advantage to his own soul.

The final comment of Eusebius might hint at a fear on the part of the emperor that he might need the prayers of the faithful to atone for the sins of his reign—particularly for the deaths of his relatives. Yet, it is more probable that this plan for his burial reflected an exalted sense of his personal mission. For like St. Paul, who had received a dramatic vision on the road to Damascus which had called him to be an apostolic missionary for the Lord, Constantine had received a divine revelation on the road to Rome which had ordained him to be an imperial agent of Christ. As Paul had felt that he was an equal of the Apostles with a calling to evangelize the Gentiles, so Constantine sensed that he was an heir of the Apostles with a commission to complete the conversion of the empire. The tremendous efforts which he gave to this goal during his reign as the first Christian emperor, and the grandiose arrangements which he made for his burial after his death in the Church of the Apostles, earned him the title *Isapostolos* ("Equal of the Apostles") in the churches of eastern orthodoxy for centuries to come. As not all the faithful felt that it was proper to hold mass over the tomb of an emperor, Constantius ordered an imperial mausoleum to be constructed off to the side of the Apostles' Church late in his reign (359), and the body of Constantine was moved there in 370. Most of the emperors and patriarchs of the Byzantine Empire would be entombed in this mausoleum for the next millennium. The original church of Constantine was rebuilt by Justinian in 550, and this *Hagioi Apostoloi* was repaired several times through the end of the Byzantine Era in 1453. Medieval manuscript illustrations depicted the later structure topped by five domes raised on drums in the Middle Byzantine Style of ecclesiastical architecture—a large central one over the crossing, and four smaller ones over the four equidistant arms of the church (Ill. 89). The eleventh-century medieval Church of *San Marco* in Venice was a copy of the Byzantine Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople. The Ottoman Turks destroyed *Hagioi Apostoloi* after capturing the city in 1453, and thereafter built the great *Fatih Camii* (Mosque of the Conqueror) in its place—using some spoils from it. The Fatih complex was rebuilt in the eighteenth century, and in its final form offers some sense of the grandeur of the site and size of the Constantinian church (Ill. 90).[5]

Although Constantine portrayed himself as a special agent of the Lord and a chosen heir to the Apostles, his conversion to the faith had occurred on the battlefield and he remained to the end of his reign a servant with a sword. He had terminated the tetrarchic persecutions in the empire by his victories in civil wars, and he had opened up mission fields beyond its borders by conquests in foreign campaigns. In the later years of his life, he came to view himself as the champion of Christianity and the protector of Christians throughout the world. Shortly after his arrival in the east, he had sent a personal letter to Shapur II (309–79), who had been King of Persia from infancy, expressing his faith in the Christian God, reviewing his victories with the aid of divine power, and commending the Christian believers in the Persian Empire to the protection of the eastern monarch. Persian envoys were sent to the court of Constantine, gifts were exchanged between the two emperors, and an alliance was established between them on the basis of the treaty between Diocletian and Narses. Christianity flourished in peace for a decade in the Middle East.[6] However, as Constantine aged and Shapur matured, relations between them deteriorated in the mid-330s. The conquests of the Roman emperor above the Danube in imitation of Trajan, the conversions of Armenia and Iberia to the Christian religion, and the expansion of Christianity in his territories began to worry the Persian emperor. Thus, Shapur sent his armies into Armenia, deposed its Roman approved king, and imposed a Persian puppet ruler; and he began border raids along the northern reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers to retake Persian territory held by the Romans since the treaty of 299. Constantine responded by sending his son Constantius II to Antioch and his nephew Hannibalianus into Anatolia in 335, and instructed them to prepare forces for a campaign into Persian territory. Shapur realized the danger of angering the greatest military leader of his age, and dispatched envoys to Constantinople in 336 in the hope of negotiating a treaty between the two empires. Constantine was unwilling to forgive the aggressions of the Persian monarch, and dismissed the envoys. He began to dream of a final eastern campaign which would equal the exploits of Trajan in the early second century and of Galerius in the late third century by conquering Mesopotamia; and also bring the Christians of the region under the protection of Rome. He appears to have planned to leave Constantinople in the spring of 337, to travel to the Holy Land for baptism in the Jordan River, and then to join his son in Roman Syria from where he would lead his forces against the Persian Empire. Over the winter of 336–37, he planned his battle strategy, ordered a special prayer tent to be made for the campaign, and recruited Christian bishops to travel with the army and to pray with him for inspiration and victory. A contemporary document from Aphrahat, a Christian sage living near Mosul, shows that the Christians of Persia were anxiously awaiting the arrival of Constantine and their liberation from Shapur in the late spring of 337. Yet, the dreams of the Christian emperor for another military victory and the hopes of the Persian Christians for their political liberation were not to be realized—Constantine's customary good health deserted him in the spring of 337, and he would not be able to lead a final military campaign into the Persian Empire.[7]



Ill. 89 A twelfth-century Byzantine manuscript illumination of the Church of *Hagioi Apostoloi* in its Middle Byzantine Style with a large central dome over the crossing and four smaller domes over the side arms of the cross-in-square plan—with the Apostles inside watching the ascension of Christ under the dome where the tomb of Constantine was placed in 337.



Ill. 90 Aerial view toward the *Fatih Camii* (the Conqueror's Mosque) above the ruins of the Holy Apostles' Church on the fourth hill of Constantinople where Constantine was entombed.

On 27 February 337, Constantine had celebrated his sixty-fourth birthday still apparently in good physical condition. However, while participating in the festivities for Easter in early April, he developed "some slight bodily indisposition." He delayed his departure for the Holy Land, and "visited the hot baths in his own city" in the hopes of curing his ailment. The emperor then attempted to begin the Persian expedition by sailing across the Sea of Marmora to Bithynia. As his health continued to decline, he recognized that he was seriously ill. He halted his eastern journey and stopped at the coastal city of Drepanum, which a few years earlier he had renamed Helenopolis after his mother. There Constantine bathed in the famed medicinal hot springs of the area, and prayed in the new church of the city dedicated to Christian martyrs (Lucian of Antioch, the favorite saint of his mother, among them). As his condition worsened in May, he sensed that his death was near. Thus, he decided to "seek purification from the sins of his past career" by undergoing the cleansing of baptism and gaining full membership in the Catholic Church. Early Christians believed that the salutary rite of baptism washed away all sins; but, also, that this holy ritual could only be experienced once in each person's life. Adult baptism was the rule through the fourth century, and it was normal for people engaged in dubious professions, e.g., politicians and generals who had to execute capital sentences or conduct military campaigns, to delay the rite until they could leave their worldly careers. Constantine confessed his sins to and received the imposition of hands from the clergy in

Helenopolis—becoming a catechumen of the Church. He thereupon attempted to return to Constantinople where he hoped to receive the baptismal rite. Unfortunately, his declining health only allowed him to make it back up the Marmora coast to a suburb of Nicomedia. There, with his life quickly ebbing away, he requested Eusebius of Nicomedia and the other clergy in his train to baptize him, and to confer upon him "the seal of salvation" which "gives immortality." After he had confessed his belief in God and his desire to become a full member of the Catholic Church, "the prelates performed the sacred ceremonies in the usual manner, and…made him a partaker of the mystic ordinance." In the course of the ceremony Constantine put aside his purple vestment, and afterwards donned a pure white garment to symbolize the cleansing of his soul. He then reclined upon a couch, and offered a prayer of thanksgiving to God for allowing him to become a "partaker of the divine light." Leading officials in his government and top generals of his army visited him in his last hours, and received his final instructions for his burial, his will, and his dispositions for the empire. He passed away on 22 May 337 in the sixty-fifth year of his life, and in the thirty-first year of his reign. It was Pentecost, the Christian festival fifty days after Easter celebrating the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles empowering them to begin the evangelization of the empire for Christ. It could not have been a more appropriate day for the death of the first Christian emperor, who truly believed that he had been selected by the Christian Deity to complete the conversion of the Roman world to Christianity.[8]

After the body of Constantine was prepared for burial, it was placed in a golden coffin by his military guard and taken to Constantinople. The corpse of the deceased emperor was then removed from the coffin, arrayed in a diadem and a purple robe, and laid on an elevated podium in the audience hall of the imperial palace for several weeks. Many of the top military commanders and civilian officials from across the empire, and thousands of the common people of the city and the nearby regions reverently passed through the palace for over a month to render homage to the longest reigning and most successful emperor they could recall. In the meantime, military officers had been sent out to the Caesars in order to inform them of the death of the Augustus. The second of the sons of Constantine and Fausta, Constantius II, quickly traveled north from Antioch to Constantinople, and made the final arrangements for the official funeral of his father. In late June 337, the twenty-year-old Constantius II had the body of Constantine placed back into its golden coffin, and then led a solemn cortege of dignitaries which escorted the coffin from the Great Palace at the lower southeast tip of the city through the Mese boulevard up to the Apostles' Church in the higher north-west part of Constantinople. There the coffin was put inside a magnificent porphyry sarcophagus surrounded by the symbolic cenotaphs for the twelve Apostles under the dome of the church as the emperor had planned. The Catholic clergy assembled in the city conducted a Christian funeral service for the champion of their religion, and with their praises and prayers commended his soul to the God whom he had served so well. The conservative and still largely pagan Senate at Rome passed a decree to honor Constantine with deification after his death—the last of the emperors to be so honored as a DIVUS. However, the two older sons of the Christian emperor, who had been raised in their father's faith, issued a special coin type which Constantine would probably have appreciated much more than the obsolete *divus* title. These *consecratio* coins carried an obverse motif exhibiting the veiled head of Constantine, and a reverse motif depicting the emperor in a chariot ascending upwards

while the hand of God reached out of the celestial clouds to welcome the pious ruler to his heavenly reward (Ill. 91). Some modern commentators have seen an analogy between the heavenly ascent of the emperor Constantine on these coins and the celestial ascent of the prophet Elijah in the Bible. The old scholar Eusebius must have recognized and enjoyed the biblical inspiration for this numismatic motif since he liked to compare Constantine to the Old Testament figure of Moses. He thought that as the latter had been chosen by God to lead the Hebrews out of Egyptian bondage and up to the promised land, so Constantine had been selected by God to lead the Christians out of imperial persecutions and into a Christian empire. In the *Vita Constantini,* which he finished writing over the two years he survived the emperor, Eusebius presented Constantine as



Ill. 91 A bronze *consecratio* coin of Constantine with the obverse exhibiting the veiled head of the emperor and the reverse depicting him in a chariot ascending upwards with the hand of God reaching out of the celestial clouds to welcome him to his heavenly reward (337–40).

the prophet of a new world order, and viewed his "apostolic burial" in the Christian capital and his ascending chariot on the consecration coins as being symbolic of his special earthly role for the Christian God and of his merited eternal reward in the heavenly kingdom.[9]

The revolutionary changes in the Roman Empire and the Christian Church initiated during the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine would be completed in the reigns of their successors in the course of the fourth century.

Politically, although the generous succession plan of Constantine was thwarted by a *coup d'état* of the military and with the connivance of his sons against the heirs of Constantius and Theodora, dynastic succession with multiple emperors would be the norm through late antiquity. The three sons of Constantine were saluted as Augusti in September of 337, and ruled over a tripartite division of the empire for the next three

years. After the death of the older brother in war, Constans and Constantius II reigned as the Augusti of the west and east respectively for a decade (340–50). When Constans was overthrown by a usurper named Magnentius, Constantius defeated him in a civil war, and then ruled as sole Augustus until his demise (350–61), but employed his surviving younger cousins Gallus (351–54) and Julian (355–61) as Caesars to assist him. At the death of Constantius, Julian (361–63) and Jovian (363–64) each briefly reigned alone. However, the Valentinian Dynasty restored the rule of multiple emperors, with Valentinian I (364–75) reigning as Augustus over the west and his brother Valens (364–78) reigning as Augustus in the east. Following the death of Valentinian, his sons Gratian (375–83) and Valentinian II (375–92) succeeded to the emperorship in the west; and upon the death of Valens, Gratian named his best western general Theodosius I (379–95) as Augustus in the east. Valentinian I married a female descendant of Crispus, and married his son Gratian to a daughter of Constantius II to connect his family to the famous Constantinian Dynasty; and Theodosius I was married to a sister of Valentinian II to link him to the Valentinians. The heirs of Theodosius the Great—as he came to be known—ruled in the western and eastern halves of the Late Roman Empire through the middle of the next century.

In the administrative, military, and economic spheres, the reforms of the tetrarchic period were solidified in the fourth century. Separate civilian and military hierarchies had evolved during the reign of Constantine. Under the sons of Constantine, distinct geographical prefectures emerged, with prefects in charge of the vicars in the dioceses and the governors in the provinces running the judicial and financial aspects of the imperial government. Constantine had formally separated the stationary border forces, the limitanei, from his mobile field forces, the comitatenses. Through the late empire, magistri militum remained at the side of the emperors and helped them coordinate military operations, and command the comites in charge of the mobile forces stationed at interior bases, and the duces in charge of the hard-point defenses on frontier lines. The expanded government and military of late antiquity were supported by the state-run regimented economy started by Diocletian and systematized by Constantine. A money economy based on the standard solidus gold coinage for major transactions, and an ever changing bronze coinage for small purchases continued side by side with exactions in kind and hereditary services. Constans and Constantius II were able to mint beautifully designed and large flan coin types in 348–50 (Ill. 88 above), which celebrated the "Restoration of Happy Times" due to the many successful reforms of the era.

Culturally, the transformation of the Roman state into a Christian empire started by Constantine continued apace under his successors and produced some of the most profound changes of the era. Constans and Constantius II expanded their father's policy of actively patronizing Christianity and aggressively weakening paganism—subsidizing the clergy and constructing churches, and prohibiting pagan rites and dismantling temples, etc. The last member of the dynasty, Julian the Apostate, however, had secretly converted to paganism during his youth, and upon the death of his cousin, attempted to return the empire to paganism. He stopped the governmental subsidies for the Church, and renewed them for the pagan cults. He tried to revive pagan priesthoods and temple rites, and prohibited Christians from being teachers. However, Julian lacked the charisma of Constantine, and his ascetic version of paganism never gained popularity with the masses who were by then largely Christian. His campaign for the ancestral rituals thus

failed, and when he perished on a Persian campaign, the army proclaimed the Christian Jovian to replace him. Only Christians would attain the imperial title thereafter. The Valentinians renewed the Constantinian policy of supporting Christianity. And Theodosius finally declared in the *Edict of Thessalonica* that he desired all citizens of the empire to adopt Catholic Christianity (380), and he thereafter outlawed all forms of paganism over the



Map 8 The Christian Roman Empire in the late fourth century.

next dozen years. Many compromises had to be made on both sides to effect the partnership between the Roman state and the Christian Church which Constantine had envisioned. The fourth century therefore witnessed a classical and Christian synthesis which brought together elements of pagan tradition and the Christian religion. For example, the Olympian gods had to be cast aside, but the popular festivals associated with them could be Christianized. In 336, Christmas replaced the winter festivals in honor of Saturn and Sol, but with green wreaths and candles dedicated to Christ as the creator of life on earth and the light of the world instead of to the false deities, and with gifts exchanged in imitation of the Magi rather than in honor of the old gods. The gladiator games had to be relinquished as too brutal for a Christian society, but Church leaders had to modify their pacifism in order to allow "just wars" to defend the Christian empire against the barbarians and infidels who threatened it. The most lascivious writings of pagan authors had to be shunned as inappropriate by Christian readers, but the better tomes of classical literature could be kept as the "handmaidens" of the Church, and employed in teaching Christians how to write more correctly and eloquently when

expressing the mysteries of their faith. The emperors could protect and patronize the Christian religion, and expect the assistance and prayers of the faithful in carrying out their secular duties; but they had to allow the bishops to control Church property, define doctrine and inculcate morality in their subjects. The great Latin and Greek Fathers of the western and eastern Churches—Sts. Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine, and Basil, the two Gregorys, and John Chrysostom—wrestled with these issues and wrote effectively about them in the late fourth and fifth centuries. And with the help of the emperors Gratian and Theodosius, the bishops of the Church—frightened by the apostasy of Julian and appalled at the acerbity of the long Arian Conflict—finally came together in a Second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople (381) and agreed upon a Nicene Creed which kept the homoousian formula of Constantine and the Nicene Fathers, but produced a more philosophically precise and more eloquently written version of it as the official statement of belief in the Triune God of the Catholic Church and the Roman Empire.

In the summer of 392 there was a final pagan revolt in the west against the policies of the Christian emperors—Valentinian II was killed and a puppet emperor Eugenius was installed in Rome to lead a pagan revival. Theodosius the Great marched west two years later. In September 394, with the aid of a "divine wind" blowing the weapons of his enemies back upon themselves, he defeated the last stand of paganism at the *Battle of the Frigidus River* in northeastern Italy. The transformation which the "new Moses" Constantine the Great had started by his triumph at the Tiber River in 312, the "new David" Theodosius the Great completed by his victory at the Frigidus River in 394—the Roman state had become the Christian empire of late antiquity (Map 8).[10]

XII
THE LEGACY AND MODERN INTERPRETATIONS

> So it was that the devout Emperor Constantine in his day turned the Roman state from its ignorant worship of idols by his own submission to our mighty Lord and God Jesus Christ, and with his subjects accepted Him with all his heart. The result is that his glorious reputation has excelled that of all his predecessors, and he has outshone them in reputation as greatly as he has surpassed them in good works.
>
> "Epistle of Pope Gregory I to King Ethelbert of England" in Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* I. 32

The reforms of Diocletian and Constantine added another 150 years of life to the ancient Roman Empire. Yet, the legacy of Constantine has lasted all the way from antiquity clear up to the present. The reign of Constantine, in fact, marked the climax of ancient classical, the middle of early Christian, and the beginning of Byzantine imperial and medieval European history. His personal conversion to Christianity and public patronage of Catholicism transformed the Christian Church from a persecuted minority cult into an established majority religion, and the pagan empire into a Christian commonwealth. Constantine established the Church in the world so firmly and helped it define its doctrine and develop its practices so fully that it was able to survive the vagaries of barbarian invasions and political upheavals of the late antique and early medieval centuries and become the defining institution in the Greek Orthodox empire of Byzantium and the Latin Catholic kingdoms of Europe for a millennium (*ca.* 450–1450). And as the Byzantine Empire was the civilizer of the Bulgarian and eastern Slavic peoples, and Catholic Europe was the civilizer of the Germanic and western Slavic peoples, the legacy of Constantine extended through them to the countries of modern Europe and to their political and cultural offshoots across the globe.[1]

The political role that Constantine played and Eusebius described provided the theories of imperial theocracy for the emperors of Byzantium and royal theocracy for the kings of Europe during the Middle Ages, and echoes of both have extended into modern times through the rule of the tsars in Russia and the "divine right" kings across Europe. The legal privileges and material benefits which the emperor and his successors showered upon the bishops of Rome aided them in becoming the Popes of the Universal Church, and in playing an important role as the spiritual leaders of Christianity from antiquity until today. By actively intervening in the Arian Conflict, Constantine helped the Church define its theology, and develop the credal statement which is still the official rule of faith

for most Christian denominations. By patronizing the production of Bibles for his new capital, the emperor hastened the closing of the Christian canon of scriptures and helped preserve a New Testament of twenty-seven books. The keen interest of Constantine and his mother Helena in Christian worship and sacred sites saw the legalization of Sunday as a day of worship, gave a new prominence to the Easter celebration, and led to the beginning of the Encaenia and Christmas festivals. And, of course, their grand church-building programs across the empire initiated the standard architectural plans for Christian houses of worship and the magnificent tradition of decorative arts therein which still please the aesthetically minded all around the world today.[2]

As the greatest Roman emperor between the second and the sixth centuries, Constantine has fascinated historians from ancient to modern times. A few disgruntled pagans in late antiquity—Zosimus being their best surviving example—tried to tarnish his reputation with false charges about his character or his policies. However, their pitiful cries were drowned out by the joyful chorus of Christian writers over the next millennium. For Eusebius and Catholic historians, Constantine was the founder of a new Christian world order, which they saw as fulfilling the will of the one true Deity. In the Greek east, he was remembered as the builder of the great Christian capital of Constantinople and as the model for the ideal Byzantine emperor. He was portrayed as the viceregent of God on earth who had victoriously defended the state and carefully protected the Church. Emperors who ruled effectively were saluted as "new Constantines" and empresses who devoted themselves to pious actions were hailed as "new Helenas." Over the eleven centuries of the Byzantine state, there were eleven emperors who bore the name of Constantine. In the eastern Orthodox communions, Constantine and Helena are revered as saints, and many houses of worship are named in their honor—including the Church of Saints Constantine and Helen in Boise, Idaho, where this book has been written. In the Latin west, Constantine was remembered as the builder of the apostolic churches of papal Rome and as the model for the ideal medieval king. He was depicted as a devoted son of the papacy who had granted the popes churches, property, and rule of the west after he had moved east to Constantinople. The clergy encouraged European kings to copy Constantine in patronizing the Church and in opposing heresy if they wished to be successful and glorious leaders in Christendom. In the western Catholic tradition, Helena attained sainthood, but Constantine was withheld this honor as the popes feared the image of a royal theocrat who might undermine their role as Vicars of Christ in a Papal World Monarchy. In the course of the Middle Ages, however, so many fanciful stories evolved around Constantine and Helena that the portraits offered of them in the arts and letters of those centuries were often more legendary than historical.[3]

With the return of humanism and the recovery of lost ancient texts in the Renaissance, and with the acclaim of reason and a rise of anti-clericalism in the Enlightenment, scholars began to give more varied pictures of Constantine. Some, like the late sixteenth-century humanist Johann Löwenklau, used the rediscoverd Zosimus to damn Constantine as a tyrant who had run the Roman Empire to ruin; while others, like the early seventeenth-century Cardinal Baronius, defended the Eusebian presentation of Constantine as a pious Christian sovereign. Edward Gibbon, the renowned eighteenth-century British historian, tried to reconcile these extremes and to proffer "a just portrait" of Constantine by an "impartial union of those defects which are confessed by his

warmest admirers, and of those virtues which are acknowledged by his most implacable enemies." His endeavor, however, produced a dichotomous Constantine who was a talented young soldier but a tyrannical old emperor.[4]

Modern interpretations of Constantine have generally fallen into three schools of thought. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Jacob Burckhardt and Henri Grégoire presented Constantine as a political pragmatist. They looked at the religious elements in the Christian sources with the eyes of modern rationalists, and discounted that evidence as unreliable. They maintained that a successful statesman like Constantine must have been a pragmatic realist. According to this school of thought, he simply feigned conversion to gain Christian support for his march to power. Since most of the documents relevant to the religious policies of Constantine are only available in Christian writings, such a view had some merit. Yet, as Christians were only a small proportion of the imperial population in 312, and had not shown much interest in military or governmental service, the idea that Constantine only pretended conversion so that he might "use the altars of the Church as a convenient footstool to the throne of empire" left much to be desired as an explanation for his changed religious policies. The political pragmatist view is weakest where it discounts the testimony of the most important sources, ignores the religious climate of the era, and interprets Constantine by modern political standards. In the early twentieth century, André Piganiol and Jacques Moreau interpreted Constantine as a religious syncretist. They took the philosophical quest for a "Highest Deity" in the third and fourth centuries seriously, and viewed Constantine as a man of his times who simply added the Christian Deity to his pantheon of heavenly patrons when he deemed it useful to do so. According to their line of reasoning, he never passed beyond an enlightened syncretism or philosophic monotheism. The retention of the Solar deity on the imperial coinage for several years after 312 seems to buttress such a viewpoint. However, with an empire predominantly pagan, Constantine had to move carefully in implementing his private beliefs in the public realm. Even Sol, the least offensive of the old gods to the Church, was taken off the coins during the "cold war" between Constantine and Licinius, and replaced by Christian symbols and victory motifs. The religious syncretist view is weakest in overemphasizing Constantine's limited toleration for paganism while ignoring his private religious beliefs and his massive public benefactions for the Catholic Church. In the mid-twentieth century, Norman Baynes, Andreas Alföldi, A.H.M.Jones, Hermann Dörries, and Ramsay MacMullen gradually turned back the rational scepticism and hypercriticism of the earlier schools of thought, and presented Constantine as a genuine convert to Christianity. The authentication of the religious writings of the emperor, studies of the appearance of Christian symbols on imperial coins, and a more accurate knowledge of the religious environment of the era aided them in viewing the conversion experience of Constantine as a real and life-altering event, and in examining the results of that event in terms of his public policies for both the early Church and the late empire.[5]

The genuine conversion viewpoint gained dominance among scholars in the late twentieth century; but the earlier studies were flawed by an incorrect chronology of the itineraries and wars of Constantine, by an inaccurate knowledge of the proper sequence of important documents from his reign, by an unclear assessment of the evolution of the religious beliefs of the emperor, and by the failure to completely utilize all the material sources from the period—particularly the coins and buildings—in conjunction with the

literary sources in order to offer a full and accurate portrait of Constantine and his secular and religious policies. Timothy Barnes went a long way to remedy these deficiencies with two excellent books on the Constantinian Era in the early 1980s.[6] Having worked seriously on the subject for a decade by that time, I found myself in agreement with his opinion that Constantine “believed sincerely that God had given him a special mission to convert the Roman Empire to Christianity.”[7] However, with about a third of his narrative work devoted to Eusebius, I saw that Barnes had disregarded or overlooked many topics needed for a full biographical study on Constantine—the use of Christian symbols on imperial coinage, detailed accounts of Constantinian church-building programs, the appearance of apocalyptic imagery in imperial letters and art, etc. Thus, in this biographical narrative, I have tried to build upon the positive work of my predecessors and contemporaries, and to present as detailed a portrait of Constantine as possible through the use of all the relevant sources available at the beginning of the twenty-first century.[8]

The Constantine who has emerged in the pages of this work was the greatest of the Illyrian soldier emperors who rescued the Roman Empire from the chaos of the third-century crisis and transformed it into a different entity with new forms and a new faith. He inherited the political abilities of his emperor father Constantius and the emotional passion of his peasant mother Helena. He learned the art of war and the science of government by serving under the emperors of the First Tetrarchy, but he proved his political acuity and military ability by maneuvering and fighting his way to the supreme position in the government during the breakup of the Second Tetrarchy. He adopted and modified the best secular reforms of Diocletian to meet the needs of the state in the fourth century; but he rejected the cruel persecution policy of his predecessors, and ruled his subjects with toleration. After receiving what he perceived was a divine revelation, he became a sincere convert to the Christian religion (Ill. 92). As his knowledge of his new confession matured and he developed a sense of mission, he used his imperial powers to promote and protect the Catholic Church in the Roman world. He defeated the last persecutor in an apocalyptic crusade, and unified the quarreling bishops in an ecumenical council. Though he suffered personal tragedy, he never wavered in his faith nor his hopes to convert his subjects to Christianity. His church constructions changed the face of imperial cities and his new capital altered the destiny of the Roman Empire. Compared favorably to Alexander the Great, Scipio Africanus, Julius Caesar, Trajan, and the “good emperors” by pagan and and Christian writers alike, Constantine has to be ranked among the greatest men in the ancient world. Whether one likes or dislikes him as a person, and whether one approves or disapproves of his policies, nevertheless, Constantine must be judged as one of the most successful political and military leaders, and one of the most influential religious and cultural figures in world history. Any lower assessment fails to appraise him fairly by the standards of his time, or to appreciate him fully by the endurance of his legacy.



Ill. 92 Gian Lorenzo Bernini's "Vision of Constantine" statue offers a dramatic Baroque interpretation of the celestial vision which transformed Constantine into an emperor with a mission in AD 312 (Vatican, 1669)

ABBREVIATIONS

Standard abbreviated names and titles are employed for the authors and titles of the ancient works cited in the notes: e.g., Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* =Euseb., *Vita Const* and *Origo Constantini Imperatoris*=*Origo*. These should not cause the readers any problem. Standard letter abbreviations are used for the titles of journals and source collections: e.g., *Journal of Roman Studies*= *JRS*. Since many of these may not be known to the readers, they are listed below.

AHC	*Annuarium Historiae Conciliorum*
AJAH	*American Journal of Ancient History*
AJP	*American Journal of Philology*
AncW	*The Ancient World*
ANF	*Ante Nicene Fathers*
AS	*Ancient Society*
BAR	*Biblical Archaeological Review*
BHAC	*Bonner Historia Augusta Colloquium*
BLE	*Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique*
BZ	*Byzantinsiche Zeitschrift*
CAHS	*Clarendon Ancient History Series*
CA	*Classical Antiquity*
CCSL	*Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*
CH	*Church History*
CHR	*Catholic Historical Review*
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*
CP	*Classical Philology*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
CRAI	*Comptes rendus, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*
CSEL	*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*
CSHB	*Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*
DACL	*Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
EMC	*Echos du monde classique*
FAS	*Frankfurter Althistorische Studien*
FC	*Fathers of the Church*

GCS	*Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der erstern drei Jahrhunderte*
GRBS	*Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*
HSCP	*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
ILCV	*Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres*
ILS	*Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*
ITQ	*Irish Theological Quarterly*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JEH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
JRH	*Journal of Religious History*
JRMMRA	*Journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LCL	*Loeb Classical Library*
NPNF	*Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*
OCT	*Oxford Classical Texts*
OECT	*Oxford Early Christian Texts*
PBSR	*Papers of the British School at Rome*
PG	*Patrologia Graeca*
PL	*Patrologia Latina*
PLRE	*Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*
RAC	*Rivista di archeologia cristiana*
REB	*Revue des études byzantines*
RHE	*Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*
RHEF	*Revue d'histoire de l'église de France*
RIC	*Roman Imperial Coinage*
SAN	*Journal of the Society for Ancient Numismatics*
TTH	*Translated Texts for Historians*
TZ	*Trierer Zeitschrift*
ZKG	*Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*
ZRG	*Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*

NOTES

Notes to Chapter I

1 The modern printed editions of the more important Greek and Latin texts (with accessible English translations) used for this study are listed in the Bibliography.

2 For modern analyses of Eusebius' career, writings and relationship with Constantine, see: Timothy D.Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, MA 1981); and Glenn F.Chesnut, *The First Christian Histories,* 2nd ed. (Macon, GA, 1986).

3 A theory first propounded by Giorgio Pasquali, "Die Composition der *Vita Constantini* des Eusebius," *Hermes,* vol. 46 (1910), pp. 369–86; and recently expanded by Barnes in *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 265–71, and in "Panegyric, History and Hagiography in Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*" and "The Two Drafts of Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*" in Chs. XI and XII of his *From Eusebius to Augustine* (Brookfield, VT 1994)—for a review of the latter, consult: Charles Odahl, *CHR,* vol. 81, 3 (1995), pp. 411–13. H.A.Drake, in "What Eusebius Knew: The Genesis of the *Vita Constantini*" *CP,* vol. 83, 1 (1988), pp. 20–38, suggests that Eusebius spent more time in Constantinople gathering data than Barnes allows in *Constantine and Eusebius*.

4 As some of these documents appeared only in Eusebius, a few modern scholars, such as Jacob Burckhardt and Henri Grégoire, raised doubts about the honesty of Eusebius and the authenticity of the documents in the *Vita*. But since an early fourth-century papyrus was found recently in Egypt containing identical parts of one of these documents (Constantine's "Epistle to the Inhabitants of the Eastern Provinces" in *Vita Const* II. 24–42), these doubts dissipated. The papyrus, now owned by the British Library and known as *Papyrus Londiniensis 878,* was analyzed by A.H.M.Jones and T.C.Skeat in "Notes on the Genuineness of the Constantinian Documents in Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*" *JEH,* vol. 5 (1954), pp. 196–200. For the Eusebian authenticity debate, see: Friedhelm Winkelmann, "Zur Geschichte des Authentizitätsproblems der *Vita Constantini*" *Klio,* vol. 40 (1962), pp. 178–243; and J.Quasten, *Patrology* (Westminster, MD, 1962), vol. III, pp. 319–24.

5 Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 11. Although the *Vita Constantini* may not be a full biography in the modern sense, the author did use the term "life" (Greek ὁ βίος) both in the title of the work, and in his statement of purpose.

6 It is also known as the *Anonymus Valesianus, Pars Prior* because its first modern editor Henri de Valois (1636) used the Latin name Henricus Valesius.

7 *Origo* 6. 33. John C.Rolfe in his introduction to the Latin text and English translation of the work printed with *Ammianus Marcellinus,* vol. III, *LCL* (Cambridge, MA, 1964), p. 506; and Ingemar König in his introduction to the Latin text and German commentary in *Origo Constantini, Anonymus Valesianus, Teil 1*. Text und Kommentar (Trier, 1987), pp. 19–28.

8 T.D.Barnes, "Jerome and the *Origo Constantini Imperatoris*" *Phoenix,* vol. 43 (1989), pp. 158–61; and Sam Lieu and Dominic Montserrat, *From Constantine to Julian: Pagan and Byzantine Views* (New York, 1996), p. 40.

9 For studies on the themes and editions of Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica,* consult: Robert M.Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian* (Oxford, 1980); Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 126–50; and Chesnut, *First Christian Histories,* pp. 111–40; and for the library at

Caesarea, see: Harry Y.Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church* (New Haven, CT, 1995), pp. 155–61.

10 For the three orthodox fifth-century Church historians, consult: R.A.Markus, "Church History and the Early Church Historians," in D.Baker, ed., *The Materials, Sources and Methods of Ecclesiastical History* (New York, 1975), pp. 1–17; Chesnut, *First Christian Histories,* pp. 175–214; and for a recent revisionist treatment of Socrates, Theresa Urbainczyk, *Socrates of Constantinople: Historian of Church and State* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1997).

11 On Philostorgius' history and Photius' summary, see: Alanna Emmett Nobbs, "Philostorgius' View of the Past," in Graeme Clarke, ed., *Reading the Past in Late Antiquity* (Canberra, 1990), pp. 251–63; and Lieu, *From Constantine to Julian,* pp. 36–38.

12 For useful studies on the Latin epitomators and their supposed common lost source, the *Kaisergeschichte,* see: A.Enmann, "Eine verlorene Geschichte der römischen Kaiser und das Buch *De Viris Illustribus Urbis Romae:* Quellenstudien," *Philologus,* Supplementband 4 (1884), pp. 335–501; T.D.Barnes, "The Lost *Kaisergeschichte* and the Latin Historical Tradition," *BHAC 1968/69* (1970), pp. 13–43; W.den Boer, *Some Minor Roman Historians* (Leiden, 1972); R.Günther, "Lateinische Historiographie vom 4. bis 6. Jahrhundert," in F.Winkelmann and W.Brandes, eds., *Quellen zur Geschichte des frühen Byzanz* (Berlin, 1990), pp. 213–23; H.W.Bird, *Sextus Aurelius Victor: A Historiographical Study* (Liverpool, 1984), *Aurelius Victor: de Caesaribus* (Liverpool, 1994), and *Eutropius: Breviarium* (Liverpool, 1993); J.W.Eadie, *The Breviarium of Festus* (London, 1967); T.D.Barnes, "The *Epitome de Caesaribus* and Its Sources," *CP,* vol. 71 (1976), pp. 258–68; and Lieu, *From Constantine to Julian,* pp. 1–6.

13 Roy J.Deferrari, *Paulus Orosius: The Seven Books of History Against the Pagans* (Washington, 1964), pp. xv–xxi.

14 On Eunapius of Sardis and Zosimus, see: R.C.Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire,* 2 vols. (Liverpool, 1981 and 1983); D.F.Buck, "Eunapius of Sardis and Theodosius the Great," *Byzantion,* vol. 58 (1988), pp. 36–53; Ronald T.Ridley, *Zosimus—New History: A Translation with Commentary* (Melbourne, 1982); and Lieu, *From Constantine to Julian,* pp. 7–23.

15 The original collection was put together in several stages from the early to late fourth century in Gaul where there were some famous rhetorical schools at Trier, Autun, and Bordeaux. However, in this collection the individual panegyrics were neither ordered nor numbered in correct sequence. Edouard Galletier, in *Panégyriques latins,* 3 vols. (Paris, 1949–55), provided Latin texts with French translations and commentary, and ordered and numbered them in correct sequence, with the ancient manuscript number placed in parentheses—thus the Trier panegyric of 313, which was ninth in chronological delivery but was twelfth in manuscript numbering, is listed as *Panegyric* IX (XII) in the French edition. R.A.B.Mynors, in XII *Panegyrici Latini* (Oxford, 1964), offered a critical Latin edition of the texts, leaving them in their original order, but putting the correct sequential number in parentheses—thus the panegyric of 313 is *Panegyric* XII (IX) in the English edition. Recently, C.E.V.Nixon and Barbara Saylor Rodgers, in *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors: The Panegyrici Latini* (Berkeley, 1994), have provided English translations and commentaries for eleven of them, but have confused things further by placing them in the correct sequential order, but only using the ancient manuscript numbers. Galletier is followed here.

16 Modern studies on the late Latin panegyrics can be found in René Pichon, *Les derniers écrivains profanes* (Paris, 1906); Galletier, *Panégyriques latins;* J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 237ff.; Sabine G.MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1981); and Nixon and Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors*. For a detailed analysis of the religious language in *Panegyric* IX (XII), consult: Charles Odahl, "A Pagan's Reaction to

Constantine's Conversion—Religious References in the Trier Panegyric of A.D. 313," *AncW,* vol. 21 (1990), pp. 45–63.

17 For the Eusebian tricennial oration and the Christian political theory within it, see: Norman H.Baynes, "Eusebius and the Christian Empire," in *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays* (London, 1960), pp. 168–72; Kenneth M.Setton, *Christian Attitude Towards the Emperor in the Fourth Century* (New York, 1967), pp. 40–56; Francis Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy,* vol. II (Washington, 1966), pp. 611–58; J.-M.Sansterre, "Eusèbe de Césarée et la naissance de la théorie 'césaropapiste'," *Byzantion,* vol. 42 (1972), pp. 131–95, and 532–94; H.A.Drake, *In Praise of Constantine* (Berkeley, 1975); Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 253–55; and Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Berkeley, 1991), pp. 53–65.

18 For modern reconstructions of his life, works, and relationship with Constantine, consult: J.Stevenson, "The Life and Literary Activity of Lactantius," *Studia Patristica,* vol. I, 1 (1957), pp. 661–77; Jean Rémy Palanque, "Sur la date du *De Mortibus Persecutorum,*" *Mélanges d'archéologie, d'épigraphie et d'histoire offerts à J.Carcopino* (Paris, 1966), pp. 711–16; Hans von Campenhausen, *The Fathers of the Latin Church* (Stanford, 1969), pp. 61–86; T.D.Barnes, "Lactantius and Constantine," *JRS,* vol. 63 (1973), pp. 29–46; J.L.Creed, *Lactantius: De Mortibus Persecutorum* (Oxford, 1984), pp. xv–xlvii; Charles Odahl, *Early Christian Latin Literature* (Chicago, 1993), pp. 67–68; and Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire: Lactantius and Rome* (Ithaca, 2000).

19 *De Mort Pers* 1. For the Lactantian contributions to Constantine's Christian education and political theory, see: Elizabeth Digeser, "Lactantius and Constantine's Letter to Arles: Dating *The Divine Institutes*" *JECS,* vol. 2, 1 (1994), pp. 33–52; and Charles Odahl, "God and Constantine: Divine Sanction for Imperial Rule in the First Christian Emperor's Early Letters and Art," *CHR,* vol. 81, 3 (1995), pp. 327–52.

20 W.H.C.Frend, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa* (Oxford, 1985) is the standard study; but T.D.Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge, MA, 1982), pp. 238–47, offers a more accurate chronology for the documents from the schism.

21 For Athanasius, consult: J.N.D.Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines,* 5th ed. (San Francisco, 1978), pp. 223–79; and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 212–44, and *Athanasius and Constantius* (Cambridge, MA, 1993).

22 For analyses of imperial edicts, letters and laws concerning the Church, see: Fergus Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (Ithaca, NY, 1977), pp. 551ff., and Simon Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs: Imperial Pronouncements and Government, A.D. 284–324* (Oxford, 1996). And for studies attempting to chart the religious development of Constantine through analyses of his own writings and imperial art, see: Norman H.Baynes, *Constantine the Great and the Christian Church* (London, 1931; rept. New York, 1975); Hermann Dörries, *Das Selbstzeugnis Kaiser Konstantins* (Göttingen, 1954); H.Kraft, *Kaiser Konstantins religiöse Entwicklung* (Tübingen, 1955); Andrew Alföldi, *The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome* (Oxford, 1969); Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius;* Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York, 1989); Rudolf Leeb, *Konstantin und Christus: Die Verchristlichung der imperialen Repräsentation unter Konstantin dem Grossen als Spiegel seiner Kirchenpolitik und seines Selbstverständnisses als christlicher Kaiser* (Berlin, 1992); and Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 101–31.

23 For some general studies, consult: Richard Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture,* 5th ed. (New York, 1986), and Robert Milburn, *Early Christian Art and Architecture* (Berkeley, 1988); and for specific sites, see: Richard Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City, 312–1308* (Princeton, 1980), and Charles Odahl, "The Christian Basilicas of Constantinian Rome," *AncW,* vol. 26, 1 (1995), pp. 3–28; Charles Coüasnon, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem* (London, 1974), and Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *The Holy Land: An Oxford Archaeological Guide from Earliest Times to 1700,* 4th ed. (Oxford,

1998); Gilbert Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale: Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451* (Paris, 1974), and Richard Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals: Topography and Politics* (Berkeley, 1983).

24 H.P.L'Orange, *Art Forms and Civic Life in the Late Roman Empire* (Princeton, 1965); and Sabine MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity,* treat the monuments and sculpture of the era.

25 Jules Maurice, *Numismatique constantinienne,* 3 vols. (Paris, 1908–12) offered the first detailed study of Constantinian coins and medallions; but his work has been superseded by C.H.V.Sutherland, *Roman Imperial Coinage, vol. VI: From Diocletian's Reform to the Death of Maximinus, A.D. 294–313* (London, 1973); Patrick M.Bruun, *Roman Imperial Coinage, vol. VII: Constantine and Licinius, A.D. 313–337* (London, 1966); and Jocelyn Toynbee, *Roman Medallions* (New York, 1944). For the use of Christian symbols on Constantinian coinage, consult: Patrick Bruun, "The Christian Signs on the Coins of Constantine," *Arctos,* Series 2, vol. 3 (1962), pp. 5–35; M.Pierre Bastien, "Le chrisme dans la numismatique de la dynastie constantinienne," *Collectionneurs et collections numismatiques* (Paris, 1968), pp. 111–19; and Charles Odahl, "Christian Symbols in Military Motifs on Constantine's Coinage," *SAN,* vol. 13, 4 (1983), pp. 64–72, and "Constantinian Coin Motifs in Ancient Literary Sources," *JRMMRA,* vol. 7 (1986), pp. 1–15.

26 J.E.Sandys, *Latin Epigraphy* (Chicago, 1974) is a standard introduction to Roman epigraphy; while the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Berlin, 1863ff.), and the *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* (Berlin, 1892–1916; rept. 1962) are standard collections of the extant inscriptions from antiquity. For Constantinian titulature and propaganda in public inscriptions, see: Thomas Grünewald, *Constantinus Maximus Augustus: Herrshaftspropaganda in der zeitgenössischen Überlieferung* (Stuttgart, 1990). A.H.M.Jones, J.R.Martindale, and J.Morris in *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire,* vol. I, A.D. 260–395 (Cambridge, 1971); and T.D. Barnes, in "The Religious Affiliation of Consuls and Prefects, 317–361," and "Pagans and Christians in the Reign of Constantius," Chs. VII and VIII of *From Eusebius to Augustine,* show how epigraphic data can be used to measure the expansion of Christians into the government and populace of the Roman Empire. Harold Mattingly, *Roman Coins* (London, 1977); and R.A.G.Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire* (London, 1990), are good introductions to the study of Roman imperial numismatics; and along with Sutherland, *RIC,* vol. VI, and Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, chronicle the inscriptions on the coins of the era.

27 Among which are the *De Viris Illustribus* of St. Jerome, the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Gelasius of Cyzicus, the *De Aedificiis* of Procopius, and the *Chronicon Paschale;* the Lafréri engraving of the pilgrimage churches of Rome, and the Buondelmonte map of old Constantinople.

Notes to Chapter II

1 *Origo* 2.2: "Constantinus, natus…in oppido Naisso" gave the future emperor's place of birth; while Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 195–225, treats the third- and fourth-century political divisions and provinces of the Roman Empire in general, and pp. 216–17, and 222, deal with Dacia and Moesia in particular.

2 The birthday inscriptions are recorded in CIL, vol. I, pp. 255, 258, and 259. The remarks on his youth while serving as a tribune in the east are in Lact., *De Mort Pers* 18. 10: "Constantinus, sanctissimus adulescens"; 24. 4: "iuvenem"; but at 24. 5 he is called "hominem"; and Constantine, "Edict to the People of the Eastern Provinces," in Euseb., *Vita Const* II. 51: "τότε κομιδῆ παῖς." The comments on his age early in his reign in the west are in Lact., *De Mort Pers* 29. 5: "adulescens"; *Paneg* VI (VII). 5. 3; and *Paneg* VII (VI). 17. 1: "imperator adulescens."

3 Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 8, and IV. 53: "Δύο μὲν οὖν πρὸς τοῖς τριάκοντα τῆς βασιλείας ἐνι αυτοῖς μησὶ τε καὶ ἡμέραις βραχείαις δέουσιν ἐπλήρου, τῆς δὲ ζωῆς ἀμφὶ τὸν διπλασίονα χρόνον" cf. Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 39, and Soz., *Hist Eccl* II. 34 (64); Vict., *Caes* 41. 16 (over 62); Eutrop., *Brev* X. 8 (65); Vict., *Epitome* 41. 15 (63).

4 Some earlier scholarship, such as André Piganiol, *L'empereur Constantin* (Paris, 1932), p. 37; A.H.M.Jones, *Constantine and the Conversion of Europe* (New York, 1962), p. 13; Ramsay MacMullen, *Constantine* (New York, 1969), p. 21; and Hermann Dörries, *Constantine the Great* (New York, 1972), pp. 16–17, favored a later date for Constantine's birth (*ca.* 280–85); but more recent scholarship, such as Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 39–43 and *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 3; Michael Grant, *Constantine the Great: The Man and His Times* (New York, 1994), p. 15; T.G.Elliot, *The Christianity of Constantine the Great* (Scranton, 1996), p. 17; and Hans A.Pohlsander, *The Emperor Constantine* (New York, 1996), p. 13, prefer an earlier date (*ca.* 271–77).

5 Vict., *Caes* 39, eloquently described how Constantius and other humble Illyrian soldiers of his day rose through the ranks to become emperors; while the *Origo* 1. 2, described the positions in which Constantius served: "Constantius…protector primum, inde tribunus, postea praeses Dalmatiarum fuit." For the early career of Constantius and the rise of the Illyrian soldier emperors, see: Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 35–37; and Stephen Williams, *Diocletian and the Roman Recovery* (New York, 1997), pp. 24–38.

6 The mid-fifth-century Church historians Socrates, *Hist Eccl* I. 17, and Philostorgius, *Hist Eccl* II. 12, mentioned the connection of Helena and Drepanum, which Constantine later renamed Helenopolis in her honor; and the sixth-century Byzantine historian Procopius, *De Aedificiis* V. 2, specified that Helena was born in Drepanum. St. Ambrose, *De Obitu Theodosii* 42, recorded that Helena had been a "stabularia"; while *Origo* 2. 2 and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 8 reported her low social status, the former calling her "vilissima" ("very lowly"). Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 8, and some late chronicles questioned the legitimacy of the marriage of Constantius and Helena; however, *Origo* 1. 2; Vict., *Caes* 39. 25; and Eutrop., *Brev* IX. 22, and X. 2, used words like "uxor" ("wife"), "coniunx" ("spouse"), and "matrimonium" ("marriage") to refer to Helena's union with Constantius. These more reliable sources indicate that he had to divorce Helena when he later married the daughter of the Augustus Maximian. On this issue, see: Barnes, *New Empire,* p. 36; and Hans A.Pohlsander, *Helena: Empress and Saint* (Chicago, 1995), pp. 12–18.

7 Some of the more important ancient sources which chronicled the crisis of the mid-third century were: Vict., *Caes* 24ff.; Eutrop., *Brev* IX. 1ff.; Zos., *Hist Nova* I. 12ff.; Lact., *De Mort Pers* 4ff.; Oros., *Hist* VII. 19ff.; and the latter half of the not very reliable *Scriptores Historiae Augustae,* the colorful biographies of the second- and third-century emperors composed in the late fourth century. George C.Brauer, Jr., in *The Young Emperors: Rome, A.D. 193–244* (New York, 1967), and *The Age of the Soldier Emperors: Imperial Rome, A.D. 244–284* (Park Ridge, NJ, 1975), offers detailed modern accounts of the period; while Michael Grant, *The Climax of Rome* (New York, 1968); Williams, *Diocletian;* and Averil Cameron, *The Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), provide useful summaries.

8 A.H.M.Jones, *Augustus* (New York, 1970), and Pat Southern, *Augustus* (New York, 1998), describe the founding of the principate by Caesar Augustus; and Albino Garzetti, *From Tiberius to the Antonines: A History of the Roman Empire A.D. 14–192,* tr. by J.R.Foster (London, 1974), chronicles and describes the early empire under his successors. For excellent studies on individual emperors in this period, see the Routledge "Roman Imperial Biographies."

9 Michael Grant, in *The Antonines: The Roman Empire in Transition* (New York, 1994), and *The Severans: The Changed Roman Empire* (New York, 1996), analyzes the changes in the late second and early third centuries which paved the way for the crisis period.

10 *Caes* 24. 9: “Abhinc dum…[imperatores] inter se armantur magis, Romanum statum quasi abrupto praecipitavere, immissique in imperium promiscue boni malique, nobiles atque ignobiles, ac barbariae multi.”
11 *Brev* IX. 1; Cf. Vict., *Caes* 25; Oros., *Hist* VII. 19; and Zos., *Hist Nova* I. 13. The Senate, however, did acquiesce in Maximin’s elevation to the emperorship.
12 For the ancient sources, see: Vict., *Caes* 25–33; Eutrop., *Brev* IX. 1–9; Zos., *Hist Nova* I. 13–40; Lact., *De Mort Pers* 4–5; Oros., *Hist* VII. 19–22; and the *Hist Aug, Maximini Duo—Gallieni Duo*. For modern works, consult: Brauer, *Age of the Soldier Emperors,* pp. 1–176; Grant, *Climax of Rome,* pp. 3–6; and Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 15–23.
13 Festus provided an overview of Rome’s imperial conquests and provincial organization in his *Brev* 1–14 before offering a more detailed account of the empire’s wars with the Parthian and Persian states on the eastern frontier in *Brev* 15–30.
14 Michael Grant, *The Army of the Caesars* (New York, 1974), offers a general history of the Roman army and its use by the emperors; and Edward N.Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire from the First Century A.D. to the Third* (Baltimore, MD, 1976), and Arther Ferrill, *Roman Imperial Grand Strategy* (Lanham, MD, 1991), analyze the changes in Roman military strategy during the imperial centuries.
15 For the ancient narratives, see: Vict., *Caes* 24–33; Eutrop., *Brev* IX. 1–11; Festus, *Brev* 22–24; Zos., *Hist Nova* I. 13–40; Lact., *De Mort Pers* 4–5; Oros., *Hist* VII. 19–22; and the *Hist Aug, Maximini Duo—Tyranni Triginta;* and for modern works, consult: Brauer, *Age of the Soldier Emperors,* pp. 1–176; Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 15–23; Grant, *Army of the Caesars,* pp. 269–76; and Luttwak, *Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire,* pp. 145–54; with Eutropius’ comment in *Brev* IX. 9 “Nam…deleto paene imperio Romano….”
16 Oros., *Hist* VII. 22. 8 for Hispania; and Zos., *Hist Nova* I. 26–37 for the east; cf. Vict., *Caes* 33; and Eutrop., *Brev* IX. 8. *Paneg* IV (VIII). 21 in 297 spoke of lands around the borders of the empire which earlier had been devastated and abandoned once again being settled and cultivated through the efforts of the father of Constantine and the other tetrarchs.
17 *Caes* 33. 13. For the economic troubles of this era, see: Brauer, *Age of the Soldier Emperors;* Grant, *Climax of Rome,* pp. 44–52; Cameron, *Later Roman Empire,* pp. 5–9; and Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 64–109.
18 Vict., *Caes* 33. 5: “Simulque Romam pestilentia grassabatur, quae saepe curis gravioribus atque animi desperatione oritur”; and Zos., *Hist Nova* I. 37.
19 Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia* XXVII. 1. 3 contains the famous “inmensa Romanae pacis maiestas” phrase; the subsequent books of Pliny, and Aelius Aristides, *Oratio ad Romam,* praise the Roman peace. For the amenities of Roman imperial civilization, its art and architecture, and religious beliefs and festivals during the first and second centuries, see the famous first three chapters of Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* ed. by Frank C. Bourne (New York, 1963), pp. 27–75; Grant, *Antonines,* pp. 83–162; Mortimer Wheeler, *Roman Art and Architecture* (New York, 1964); Michael Grant, *Art in the Roman Empire* (New York, 1995); John Ferguson, *The Religions of the Roman Empire* (Ithaca, NY, 1970), and Ramsay MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven, CT, 1981).
20 On the breakaway states and their cultural revivals, see: J.F.Drinkwater, *The Gallic Empire: Separatism and Continuity in the North-Western Provinces of the Roman Empire, A.D. 260–274* (Stuttgart, 1987); and Richard Stoneman, *Palmyra and Its Empire: Zenobia’s Revolt Against Rome* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1994).
21 On this topic, see: J.H.W.G.Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion* (Oxford, 1979); and Alan Wardman, *Religion and Statecraft Among the Romans* (Baltimore, MD, 1982).
22 See *Hist Aug, Gallieni Duo* 7. 1–3, and Brauer, *Age of the Soldier Emperors,* pp. 164–70, for the destruction of the temple at Ephesus; and Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in*

Roman Religion, p. 233, and MacMullen, *Paganism,* pp. 126–30, for the decline in dedications.

23 On the philosophical and syncretistic tendencies of the mid-third century, consult: Brauer, *Age of the Soldier Emperors,* pp. 152–61; Ferguson, *Religions of the Roman Empire,* pp. 190–243; and E.R.Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety* (New York, 1970). And on the failure of paganism to meet private religious needs during this era, see: MacMullen, *Paganism,* pp. 127–37; Robert Turcan, *Les cultes orientaux dans le monde romain,* 2nd ed. (Paris, 1992), Eng. trans. by Antonia Nevill as *The Cults of the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 328–41; and Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York, 1989).

24 Matthew 4:17.

25 Summarized from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the accounts of Jesus accepted by Constantine and fourth-century Christians. For recent studies, see: Paula Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ: The Origins of the New Testament Images of Jesus* (New Haven, CT, 1988); E.P.Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London, 1993); and Bart D.Ehrman, *Jesus, Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium* (Oxford, 1999).

26 The book of *Acts* and the Pauline and Catholic *Epistles* of the New Testament, and Euseb., *Hist Eccl* I–III, were the major ancient literary sources for first-century Christianity; while F.F.Bruce, *New Testament History* (New York, 1971); Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (New York, 1983), Ch. 1; and W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Phildelphia, PA, 1985), Chs. 1–4, are excellent modern studies.

27 The quote from Tertullian is in the *Apologeticum* 37=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* p. 51: “Hesterni sumus, et vestra omnia implevimus: urbes, insulas, castella, municipia, conciliabula, castra ipsa, tribus, decurias, palatium, senatum, forum; sola vobis reliquimus templa.” The Sub-Apostolic Fathers, such as Ignatius of Antioch and Irenaeus of Lyons, and the Apologists, such as Justin Martyr at Rome and Tertullian of Carthage (in *PG, PL, GCS, CSEL,* and *ANF*), and Euseb , *Hist Eccl* III–V, were the major ancient literary sources for the second-century Church; while Chadwick, *Early Church,* Chs. 2–5; and Frend, *Rise of Christianity,* Chs. 4–7, offer modern comment. Robert M.Grant, *Gnosticism and Early Christianity* (New York, 1966); and Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York, 1981) deal with the fringe groups which were being expelled from the Church.

28 Tertullian of Carthage, Hippolytus of Rome, and Clement of Alexandria in the early decades, and Cyprian of Carthage, Cornelius and Dionysius of Rome, and Dionysius of Alexandria in the mid decades (in *PG, PL, GCS, CSEL,* and *ANF*) and Euseb., *Hist Eccl* VI–VII, were the major ancient literary sources for the third-century Church up to the persecutions of Decius and Valerian; Chadwick, *Early Church,* Chs. 5–7; and Frend, *Rise of Christianity,* Chs. 8–12, provide modern commentary.

29 Tertullian in *Apol* 39=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 55–56, described the *area* or “communal chest” of the Church, its charitable uses, and noted that pagans marveled at how the Christians loved one another—“Vide,” inquiunt, “ut invicem se diligant” (*ca.* 197); Eusebius, in *Hist Eccl* VI. 43. 11, preserved a letter from Bishop Cornelius of Rome which indicated that the Roman church had over 1,500 widows and distressed people on its charitable roll in the mid-third century (*ca.* 251–53), and, in *Hist Eccl* VII. 22. 7–10, quoted a letter of Bishop Dionysius of Alexandria describing how the Christians of his church took great care in the burying of their dead (*ca.* 260). Many modern scholars have surmised that Christian charity was a key reason for the success of the Church in the Roman world, as for example Chadwick, *Early Church,* p. 56. For the effects of Christian miracles and preaching, compare: Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire A.D. 100–400* (New Haven, CT, 1984), pp. 17–42. For “house churches,” and early Christian architecture before Constantine, see: Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture,* pp. 23–38; and L.Michael White, *Building God’s House in the Roman World* (Baltimore, MD, 1990). On the Christian insistence on resurrection of the dead, consult: Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York, 1995), Chs. 1–2.

And for early Christian burial practices, the catacombs and their art, see: L.Hertling and E.Kirschbaum, *The Roman Cata-combs and Their Martyrs* (Milwaukee, WI, 1956); J.Stevenson, *The Catacombs: Rediscovered Monuments of Early Christianity* (London, 1978); and Paul Corby Finney, *The Invisible God: The Earliest Christians on Art* (New York, 1994)—with a review of the latter by Charles Odahl in *CHR,* vol. 82, 4 (1996), pp. 674–75.

30 See Mt 5 and 22 for the pacific commands and love ethic of Jesus; and Hipp., *Apostolic Tradition* II. 17–19, and Tert., *De Idololatria* 19, and *De Corona Militis* 11 for the strict application of them by the Church Fathers.

31 Mt 22, Rm 13, and I P 2 showed a positive New Testament attitude to the state, while Rv 12–13, and 17–18 revealed a negative attitude. Justin Martyr, *First Apology,* Tert., *Apol, De Idol,* and *De Cor Mil;* Hipp., *Commentary on Daniel,* and *On the Antichrist;* and Origen, *Against Celsus,* were key early Christian texts which dealt with the Church-state issue (most in *ANF*).

32 C.J.Cadoux, *The Early Church and the World* (Edinburgh, 1925; rept. 1955); Harold Mattingly, *Christianity in the Roman Empire* (New York, 1967); R.A. Marcus, *Christianity in the Roman World* (New York, 1974); Aldolph Harnack, *Militia Christi: Die christliche Religion und der Soldatenstand in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Tübingen, 1905); C.John Cadoux, *The Early Christian Attitude to War* (London, 1919; rept. New York, 1982); Hans von Campenhausen, "Der Kriegsdienst der Christen in der Kirche des Altertums," *Offener Horizont:* Festschrift für Karl Jaspers (1953), pp. 255–64; Roland Bainton, 'The Early Church and War," *HTR,* vol. 39 (1946), pp. 189–212, and *Christian Attitudes toward War and Peace* (Nashville, TN, 1960), pp. 53–84; and Charles M.Odahl, *Constantine and the Militarization of Christianity: A Contribution to the Study of Christian Attitudes toward War and Military Service* (Doctoral Dissertation for the University of California, San Diego, 1976), Ch. I, are works of modern scholarship citing and analyzing the ancient evidence dealing with the Church and state, and Christians and war issues summarized here.

33 Euseb., *Hist Eccl* I. 25, and II. 17–18; and Lact., *De Mort Pers* 2–3, preserved the Christian traditions.

34 Euseb., *Hist Eccl* III. 33 summarized Trajan's rescript, and note 1, p. 165 of the *NPNF* translation of Eusebius contains Pliny the Younger's *Epistle* X. 96 describing the Christian problem in Bithynia, and *Epistle* X. 97 offering the emperor's response (Latin texts in *LCL*).

35 Euseb., *Hist Eccl* III. 34; IV. 16; and V. 1–4.

36 *Apol* 40=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 56–7: "Si Tiberis ascendit in moenia, si Nilus non ascendit in arva, si caelum stetit, si terra movit, si fames, si lues, statim 'Christianos ad leonem!' adclamatur." For modern accounts of the early persecutions, consult: Chadwick, *Early Church,* pp. 25–31; Frend, *Rise of Christianity,* pp. 109–10, 148–51, 172–74, and 180–84; Mattingly, *Christianity in the Roman Empire,* pp. 29–51; and the classic study by W.H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church* (Garden City, NY, 1967), Chs. vi–x.

37 The *Alethés Logos=The True Doctrine* of Celsus has not survived independently; but Origen quoted large parts of it in his *Contra Celsum,* the Greek text of which was edited by Paul Koetschau in the *GCS* series (Berlin, 1899), with Eng. tr. by Henry Chadwick, *Origen, Contra Celsum* (Cambridge, 1953); and R.Joseph Hoffmann, *Celsus on the True Doctrine—A Discourse Against the Christians* (Oxford, 1987). Orig., *Contr Cels* VIII. 55ff. contains the pagan political and social critique against the Christians, and the Christian response to the pagans. For pagan attitudes toward Christians, see: Stephen Benko, *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians* (Bloomington, IN, 1984); and Robert L.Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven, CT, 1986). For the reasons why the Roman government persecuted Christians, consult: Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety,* pp. 111–16; and Mattingly, *Christianity in the Roman Empire,* pp. 33–51.

38 Euseb., *Hist Eccl* VI. 1, 4, 5, 28, and 39–42, and VII. 1, and 10–12, preserved ancient records of the third-century persecutions against the Christians; while Chadwick, *Early Church,* Ch. 7; and Frend, *Rise of Christianity,* Chs. 8–9, and *Martyrdom and Persecution,* Chs. xi–xiii, contain modern analyses.

39 Both Constantius and Helena were probably born between 248 and 250—for a summary of the ancient evidence on their births, see: Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 35–37.

40 Vict., *Caes* 33; Eutrop., *Brev* IX. 8–11; Oros., *Hist* VII. 22; *Hist Aug, Gallieni Duo;* Euseb., *Hist Eccl* VII. 13 and VIII. 1; and Zos., *Hist Nova* I. 29–40 were the main ancient sources for Gallienus; Grant, *Climax of Rome,* pp. 33 39–40; Brauer, *Age of the Soldier Emperors,* pp. 127–76; Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 24–26; Pat Southern and Karen R.Dixon, *The Late Roman Army* (New York, 1996), pp. 11–15; Mattingly, *Christianity in the Roman Empire,* p. 54; Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution,* pp. 322ff.; and Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 93–110 offer modern appraisals.

41 Vict., *Caes* 34; Eutrop., *Brev* IX. 11; Oros., *Hist* VII. 23. 1; *Hist Aug, Divus Claudius;* and Zos., *Hist Nova* I. 41–46, were the main ancient sources; while Grant, *Climax of Rome,* p. 33; Brauer, *Age of the Soldier Emperors,* pp. 177–87; and Williams, *Diocletian,* p. 29, offer modern accounts of the reign of Claudius.

42 The key ancient sources for the reign and achievements of Aurelian were: Vict., *Caes* 35; Eutrop., *Brev* IX. 13–15; Festus, *Brev* 24; Oros., *Hist* VII. 23; *Hist Aug, Divus Aurelianus;* Zos., *Hist Nova* I. 48–62; Lact., De Mort Pers 6; and Euseb., *Hist Eccl* VII. 28. 4–30. 22. Useful modern works include: Brauer, *Age of the Soldier Emperors,* pp. 188–238; Alaric Watson, *Aurelian and the Third Century* (New York, 1999); Stoneman, *Palmyra and Its Empire,* pp. 163–87; Drinkwater, *The Gallic Empire,* pp. 41–44; Williams, *Diocletian,* p. 30; Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 116–21; and Ferguson, *Religions of the Roman Empire,* pp. 54–55.

43 See Vict., *Caes* 36–37; Eutrop., *Brev* IX. 16–17; Oros., *Hist* VII. 24; *Hist Aug, Tacitus—Probus;* Zos., *Hist Nova* I. 63–71 for the ancient sources; and Brauer, *Age of the Soldier Emperors,* pp. 239–56; Williams, *Diocletian,* p. 30; Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 121–28; and Stephen Johnson, *The Roman Forts of the Saxon Shore* (London, 1976), esp. pp. 94–113, for modern scholarship on Tacitus and Probus.

44 For the short reign of Carus and his sons, and the rise of Diocletian, Vict., *Caes* 38–39. 15; Eutrop., *Brev* IX. 18–20; Festus, *Brev* 24; Oros., *Hist* VII. 24. 4–25. 1; and *Hist Aug, Carus et Carinus et Numerianus* were the main ancient sources; while Brauer, *Age of the Soldier Emperors,* pp. 257–67; Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 22–23 and 32–38; Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 30–31; and Southern and Dixon, *Late Roman Army,* pp. 14–15 provide modern accounts.

45 *Caes* 39. 26: "His sane omnibus Illyricum patria fuit: qui, quamquam humanitatis parum, ruris tamen ac militiae miseriis imbuti satis optimi reipublicae fuere." Cf. *Hist Aug, Carus* 18. 3–5. *Origo* 1. 2 identified the positions Constantius held during the minority of his son: "Constantius…protector primum, inde tribunus, postea praeses Dalmatiarum fuit"; while the *Hist Aug, Probus* 22. 3 recorded him serving with Diocletian under Probus; and *Hist Aug, Carus* 17. 6 dated his governorship of Dalmatia to the reign of Carinus. See again Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 35–37, for a summary of the evidence. For new work on the "Third Century Crisis," consult: Michael Grant, *The Collapse and Recovery of the Roman Empire* (New York, 1999): and Pat Southern, *The Roman Empire from Severus to Constantine* (New York, 2001).

Notes to Chapter III

1 The biographies of second- and third-century emperors in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* ended with the death of Numerian and the elevation of Diocletian; and there is a gap in the

extant *Historia Nova* of Zosimus which covered the period from the middle of the reign of Probus to the retirement of Diocletian (*ca.* 280–305). Thus, the main ancient literary sources for the reign and reforms of Diocletian were the epitomized histories of Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, Festus, and Orosius; the pagan panegyrics of Gallic orators; and the Christian writings of Lactantius and Eusebius; to these can be added extant imperial rescripts, edicts, inscriptions, art and coins. Some of the more important modern studies are William Seston, *Dioclétien et la tétrarchie I: Guerres et réformes* (Paris, 1946); A.H.M.Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284–602: A Social, Economic and Administrative Survey* (Norman, OK, 1964); Barnes, *New Empire;* Frank Kolb, *Diocletian und die Erste Tetrarchie: Improvisation oder Experiment in der Organisation monarchischer Herrschaft?* (Berlin, 1987); Cameron, *Later Roman Empire;* Corcoran, *Empire of the Tetrarchs;* and Williams, *Diocletian*.

2 See Vict., *Caes* 39. 17–18; Eutrop., *Brev* IX. 20; Oros., *Hist* VII. 25. 2; *Paneg* II (X). 11. 6; and Lact., *De Mort Pers* 52. 3 for the ancient sources; and Seston, *Dioclétien et la tétrarchie,* pp. 56–81; Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* vol. I, p. 38; Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 3–4; Kolb, *Diocletian und die Erste Tetrarchie,* pp. 10–67; Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 43–60; and Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 132–35 for modern works on the genesis of the Dyarchy and Jovian-Herculian imperial theology.

3 *Paneg* II (X), III (XI), and IV (VIII), Vict., *Caes* 39. 17–21, Eutrop., *Brev* IX. 20–21, and Oros., *Hist* VII. 25. 2–3 listed some of the military campaigns of this period, while Lact., *De Mort Pers* 7. 8–10 referred to the building projects of Diocletian in Nicomedia. T.D.Barnes, in "Imperial Campaigns, A.D. 285—311," *Phoenix,* vol. 30, 2 (1976), pp. 174–78, has shown how imperial titles in decrees and on monuments help place these imperial campaigns in proper sequence. For the revolt of Carausius in the west and the empire of the Persians in the east at this time, see: P.J.Casey, *Carausius and Allectus: The British Usurpers* (New Haven, CT, 1995); and Josef Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia from 550 B.C. to 650 A.D.* (London, 1996), pp. 151ff. And for modern reconstructions of the years 285–89, consult: Seston, *Dioclétien et la tétrarchie,* pp. 56–81; Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 49–51, 56–58, and 254–55; Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 45–55; and the commentary on the contemporary panegyrics in Nixon and Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors,* pp. 41–75.

4 *Paneg* III (XI). 5–7 alluded to the imperial campaigns and victories of this period; while the victory titles attached to the names of the emperors in subsequent imperial documents (such as the price edict of 301) confirmed them. For an analysis of these titles, and an overview of the period, see again: Barnes, "Imperial Campaigns, A.D. 285–311," pp. 176–78, *New Empire,* pp. 51–52, 57–58; and Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 55–56.

5 *Paneg* III (XI). 4, 8–14, and 19 recounted the arrival of the emperors in Milan, and their joint appearances and conversations; while Vict., *Caes* 39. 20–23; Eutrop., *Brev* IX. 22; and Oros., *Hist* VII. 25. 4, alluded to some of the looming dangers. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity,* pp. 22–26; Nixon and Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors,* pp. 76–80; Seston, *Dioclétien et la tétrarchie,* pp. 86–89; Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 52 and 58, and *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 8; and Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 56–63 deal with the conference of 291 and its aftermath.

6 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 7–18 provided a contemporary description of the reforms and history of the First Tetrarchy between 293–305. *Origo* 1. 2, Vict., *Caes* 39. 24–48, Eutrop., *Brev* IX. 22–27, and Oros., *Hist* VII. 25. 4–14 also recorded the creation of the Caesars, the divorces of their previous wives and marriages to the daughters of the Augusti, and some of the reforms and military campaigns of the period. Lactantius, Aurelius Victor, contemporary panegyrists (*Paneg* II (X), III (XI), IV (VIII), and V (IX), and various inscriptions (*ILS* 621, 622, 623, 634, 659, 661, 8930, and 8931) referred to the eastern emperors as Jovians and to the western emperors as Herculians; while some special gold coin motifs from key mints in this period, such as Trier, Carthage, Nicomedia, Antioch, and Alexandria, paired the emperors with their patron gods—Diocletian and Jupiter, Maximian and Hercules, Galerius and Sol, and Constantius and Mars. On the basis of a couple of ambiguous passages in

Paneg II (X). 11.4 and IV (VIII). 1–2, Barnes, in *New Empire,* pp. 36–38, and 125–26, and *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 7–9, has posited that Constantius had become the Praetorian Prefect and married the daughter of Maximian as early as 288; and that by extension, Galerius may also have served as the Prefect of Diocletian before 293. However, neither of them is explicitly mentioned by name in any source as holding a prefecture before they became Caesars, and other people are explicitly named as prefects in inscriptions of the Dyarchy period. Although it is possible that they were prefects before becoming Caesars, it is more probable that they were military commanders under their respective Augusti in the years before 293. The fact that the *Origo* agreed with the narrative historians that Constantius put aside Helena when he became a Caesar ("Constantius…cum Galerio a Diocletiano Caesar factus est. Relicta enim Helena priore uxore, filiam Maximiani Theodoram duxit uxorem"), makes it more probable that the divorces and remarriages of the Caesars took place in 293 rather than earlier as well. For modern scholarship on the inauguration of the Tetrarchy, consult: Seston, *Dioclétien et la tétrarchie,* pp. 89–100; Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* vol. I, pp. 39–42; Kolb, *Diocletian und die Erste Tetrarchie,* pp. 68–114; Cameron, *Later Roman Empire,* pp. 30–32; Pohlsander, *Helena,* pp. 16–18; Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 63–70; Sutherland, *RIC,* vol. VI, pp. 1–11; and Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 142–49.

7 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 7–9 characterized each of the tetrarchs, and described the innovations of the new order, and the building program of Diocletian at Nicomedia; Vict., *Caes* 39. 1–4, 8, and 30 emphasized the introduction of the title *Dominus* and oriental clothing and court ceremonies by Diocletian, and listed the territorial divisions of the Tetrarchy; while Eutrop., *Brev* IX. 20–26 echoed this material. Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion,* pp. 235–45, analyzes the imperial theology of the new order; L'Orange, *Art Forms and Civic Life in the Later Roman Empire,* pp. 69–84, and MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity, passim,* describe and illustrate the palaces and elaborate ceremonies of late Roman emperors; while Seston, *Dioclétien et la tétrarchie,* pp. 193–257; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 8–12, and Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 64–70 analyze the theory and system of the Tetrarchy.

8 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 7=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 73–74:

> Diocletainus…orbem terrae…subvertit. Tres enim participes regni sui fecit in quattuor partes orbe diviso et multiplicatis exercitibus, cum singuli eorum longe maiorum numerum militum habere contenderent, quam priores principes habuerant…. Provinciae quoque in frusta concisae, multi praesides et plura officia singulis regionibus ac paene iam civitatibus incubare; item rationales multi et magistri et vicarii praefectorum…[et] exactiones rerum innumerabilium [fuerunt]…. Huc accedebat infinita quaedam cupiditas aedificandi,…hic basilicae, hic circus, hic moneta, hic armorum fabrica, hic uxori domus, hic filiae.

9 Consult Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* vol. I, pp. 49–52; Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 123ff., and *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 9; and Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 102–114 for descriptions of the officials at the courts.

10 For the *Notitia Dignitatum,* see the authoritative edition by O.Seeck (Berlin, 1876); and the detailed analysis of its contents by Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* vol. II, pp. 1417–1450. Early attempts to distinguish the military reforms of Diocletian and Constantine were made by E.C.Nischer, "The Army Reforms of Diocletian and Constantine and Their Modifications up to the Time of the *Notitia Dignitatum," JRS,* vol. 13 (1923), pp. 1–55; H.M.D.Parker, "The Legions of Diocletian and Constantine," *JRS,* vol. 23 (1933), pp. 175–89; and Seston, *Dioclétien et la tétrarchie,* pp. 295–311. The fundamental study now accepted by most

scholars is that of Denis van Berchem, *L'armée de Dioclétien et la réforme constantinienne* (Paris, 1952). For more recent studies, see: Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* vol. I, pp. 52–60; Luttwak, *Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire,* pp. 127–90; Stephen Johnson, *Late Roman Fortifications* (Totowa, 1983); Southern and Dixon, *Late Roman Army,* pp. 15–20; Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 91–101; and Cameron, *Later Roman Empire,* pp. 33–36.

11 Barnes prints a copy of the *Verona List* as it appears in the seventh-century manuscript held in the library of the Cathedral of Verona in his *New Empire,* pp. 201–8. For analyses of the administrative reforms of Diocletian, see: J.G.C. Anderson, "The Genesis of Diocletian's Provincial Re-organization," *JRS,* vol. 22 (1932), pp. 24–32; Seston, *Dioclétien et la tétrarchie,* pp. 311–47; Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* vol. I, pp. 42–52; Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 140–225, and *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 9–10; Cameron, *Later Roman Empire,* pp. 39–43; and Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 102–14.

12 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 7. 4–5 complained about the "enormous size of the requisitions" ("enormitate indictionum"), and the "surplus wealth and largess" Diocletian amassed under the economic reforms of the Tetrarchy; while Vict., *Caes* 39. 45 commented that the "grain supply and the welfare of the taxpayers were carefully and responsibly handled" ("annona urbis ac stipendiariorum salus anxie solliciteque habita") under the new system. Most commentators see the new system as more equitably spreading the tax load across the empire. For the economic reforms in general, see: Seston, *Dioclétien et la tétrarchie,* pp. 261–94; Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* vol. I, pp. 61–70; Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 226–37; Cameron, *Later Roman Empire,* pp. 36–39; and Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 115–39; and for the coinage reform in particular, consult: Sutherland, *RIC,* vol. VI, pp. 1–11, and 93–100; and Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 142–49.

13 Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus* 80, said that "Lactantius…was summoned by Diocletian the emperor…to teach rhetoric at Nicomedia" ("Lactantius…sub Diocletiano principe accitus… Nicomediae rhetoricam docuit"); and Lactantius confirmed this as well in several of his own works, such as the *Div Inst* V. 2, "I was teaching rhetorical learning in Bithynia." For his career, consult: Stevenson, "The Life and Literary Activity of Lactantius"; Campenhausen, *The Fathers of the Latin Church,* pp. 61–86; Barnes, "Lactantius and Constantine"; and Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 67–68. In *Paneg* V (IX), Eumenius several times mentioned his role as *Magister sacrae memoriae* at a western imperial court, and his appointment as professor of rhetoric at Autun by Constantius—for the Latin text, an English translation and commentary, see: Nixon and Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors,* pp. 145–77, and 554–63. For the legal rescripts of the Tetrarchy, and the work of the jurists Gregorianus and Hermogenianus, see: A.M.Honoré, "'Imperial' Rescripts, A.D. 193–305: Authorship and Authen*ticity,*" *JRS,* vol. 69 (1979), pp. 51–64; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 10; Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 142–45; and Corcoran, *Empire of the Tetrarchs,* esp. pp. 25–122. For the deities favored by and the imperial theology of the First Tetrarchy, consult: Ferguson, *Religions of the Roman Empire,* pp. 32–76; Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion,* pp. 235–44; Carson, ibid., and Williams, ibid., and pp. 140–50, for a fine summary of "The New Order."

14 *Origo* 2. 2 reported that Constantine "had been instructed little in letters" ("litteris minus instructus") before he went off to serve under Diocletian and Galerius in the east (293), while Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 19–2 commented that Constantine "had been endowed with an education in letters" ("κοσμούμενος. . . παιδεύσει λόγων")when he saw him traveling through the east with Diocletian (301). Due to the unstable conditions of the era in which he grew up and the migratory life of his military family, his early education had probably been minimal. However, his numerous writings and public presentations extant from later decades indicate that he became very literate, if not always eloquent, from studies during his adulthood. *Paneg* VI (VII). 3–5, given before Constantine shortly after he became an emperor (307), waxed eloquently about how he inherited both the physical features and

the manly virtues of his father. Coin portraits, though sometimes stylized, also revealed the resemblance. *Paneg* VI (VII). 6 recorded that a prominently placed mosaic in a palace at Aquileia portrayed young Fausta presenting Constantine with a gleaming and plumed helmet when he was about to depart for the east; and *Paneg* VI (VII). 5, *Paneg* VII (VI). 3, Lact., *De Mort Pers* 18, *Origo* 2. 2–3, and Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 19 all reported Constantine's service in the east under Diocletian and Galerius while his father was Caesar in Gaul (293–305). Although no precise evidence exists for the whereabouts of Helena during this period, later events seem to indicate that she always remained close to her son, and may have helped raise his first son Crispus who was born in the east around the year 300. Constantine's return to his father, and Helena's re-emergence from obscurity are treated in later chapters.

15 The major ancient literary sources for the western tetrarchic campaigns of this period were: *Paneg* IV (VIII); *Paneg* V (IX); *Paneg* VI (VII); *Paneg* VII (VI); Vict., *Caes* 39. 22–43; Eutrop., *Brev* IX. 22–23; and Oros., *Hist* VII. 25. For modern scholarship, drawing upon documentary, epigraphic, archaeological, and numismatic evidence as well as the literary sources, consult: D.E.Eichholz, "Constantius Chlorus' Invasion of Britain," *JRS,* vol. 43 (1953), pp. 41–46; Johnson, *Roman Forts of the Saxon Shore,* esp. pp. 23–33; B.H.Warmington, *The North African Provinces from Diocletian to the Vandal Conquest* (Cambridge, 1954); Barnes, "Imperial Campaigns, A.D. 285–311," esp. pp. 179–80; Sutherland, *RIC,* vol. VI, esp. the western mints of Treveri, Carthage, and Rome; and Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 143–47; Seston, *Dioclétien et la tétrarchie,* pp. 101–28; Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* vol. I, p. 39; Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 56–61, and 254–55, and *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 15–16; and Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 71–75.

16 *Paneg* IV (VIII). 5 and 10, and *Paneg* V (IX). 18 and 21 briefly mentioned some of the eastern victories along the Danube, the Nile and the Euphrates; but more data was provided by Lact., *De Mort Pers* 9. 5–8; Vict., *Caes* 39. 33–38; Eutrop., *Brev* IX. 23–25 (with the quote in the text from the latter chapter); Festus, *Brev* 25; and Oros., *Hist* VII. 25. For modern treatments using these as well as papyrological, epigraphic, archaeological, and numismatic sources, see: Barnes, "Imperial Campaigns, A.D. 285–311," pp. 180–90; Christopher Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity* (Baltimore, MD, 1997), esp. pp. 19–21; Jean-Yves Empereur, *Alexandria Rediscovered* (New York, 1998), pp. 100–9; Wiesehöfer, *Ancient sPersia,* pp. 153ff.; Johnson, *Late Roman Fortifications, passim;* Sutherland, *RIC,* vol. VI, esp. the eastern mints of Nicomedia, Antiochia, and Alexandria; and Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 147–49; Seston, *Dioclétien et la tétrarchie,* pp. 129–83; Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* vol. I, p. 39; Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 52–55, 61–63, and 254–55, and *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 17–18; and Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 78–88.

17 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 7–18; *Paneg* VII (VI). 6; Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 13–20; *Origo* 2. 2–3; Vict., *Caes* 39. 43–45; Eutrop., *Brev* IX. 23 and 25; and Oros., *Hist* VII. 25 provide a number of details on the activities of the tetrarchs in the period of *ca.* 299–305; but this literary material must be augmented by numismatic, epigraphic, legal and archaeological evidence. For the data, and a chronology of "Imperial Residences and Journeys," consult: Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 47–64.

18 *Paneg* IV (VIII). 1, 9, and 21 recorded the resettlement of barbarians as farmers in depopulated areas of Gaul and Thrace. Vict., *Caes* 39. 45; Eumenius, *Paneg* V (IX). 3–6; and Lact., *De Mort Pers* 8. 8–10 described the rebuilding campaigns of the tetrarchs. For this, see: L'Orange, *Art Forms and Civic Life in the Late Roman Empire;* and Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 148–50. Diocletian's "Edict on Prices" is printed in CIL, vol. III, pp. 802ff., and S.Lauffer, *Diokletians Preisedikt* (Berlin, 1971), with an Eng. tr. by E.R.Graser in Tenney Frank, *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome,* vol. V (Baltimore, MD, 1940), pp. 305–421. Lactantius' comments on the edict are in *De Mort Pers* 8. 6–7. The *Codex Theodosianus* was filled with imperial legislation from the fourth century tying people to jobs and services for the state. On the economic policies of Diocletian, see again: Seston, *Dioclétien et la tétrarchie,* pp. 261–94; Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* vol. I, pp. 61–70;

Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 226–37, and *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 10–11; Cameron, *Later Roman Empire,* pp. 36–39; and Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 115–39.

19 On the Latin rhetorical schools and panegyrics in the west, see: Pichon, *Les derniers écrivains profanes;* Galletier, *Panégyriques latins;* and Nixon and Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors;* and for the study of Latin in the east and the later Latin historians, consult: H.I.Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité* (Paris, 1965), pp. 376ff.; Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* vol. II, pp. 986–91; Den Boer, *Some Minor Roman Historians;* and R.Günther, "Lateinische Historiographie vom 4. bis 6. Jahrhundert." Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 19–20; and Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 143–45, comment on the tetrarchic insistence on the use of Roman legal traditions over native customs, and cite several examples, including the ban on consanguinous marriages. Vict., *Caes* 39. 45; and Lact., *De Mort Pers* 10ff., are among the many ancient sources which recorded the assiduous religious practices of the tetrarchs. On this and how it led to the "Great Persecution," see: Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion,* pp. 235–52; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 18–22; and Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 153–75.

20 The comments of Eusebius are in *Hist Eccl* VIII. 1, and those of Lactantius in *De Mort Pers* 12. For the *aula ecclesiae,* consult: White, *Building God's House in the Roman World,* pp. 125–39; and for modern assessments of the relative status of official paganism, the mystery cults, and Christianity in the late third century, see: Ferguson, *Religions of the Roman Empire,* pp. 99ff.; Liebeschutz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion,* pp. 232–77; MacMullen, *Paganism,* pp. 112–37; Turcan, *Cults of the Roman Empire,* pp. 328–41; Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution,* pp. 324–50, and *Rise of Christianity,* pp. 439–72; and Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 153–72.

21 Th. Ruinart, *Acta Martyrum* (Paris, 1689), pp. 340ff., contains the accounts of most of the military martyrs of this period. Harnack, *Militia Christi,* p. 83, commented "Die Zahl von Akten über Soldaten-Martyrien, namentlich aus der letzen Verfolgung, ist nicht gering, aber wenige sind zuverlässing." He accepted the verity of the *Acta Maximiliani* (295) and *Marcelli* (298) from North Africa, and *Julii* (302) from Moesia, and printed them in an appendix to his book, pp. 114ff. Cadoux, *Early Church and the World,* pp. 574–87, accepted these and a few others, and printed long excerpts from them in his notes. Cf. Cadoux, *Early Christian Attitude to War,* pp. 149–57; Dom Henri Leclercq, "Militarisme," *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (Paris, 1933), vol. XI, 1, pp. 1107–81; and Odahl, *Constantine and the Militarization of Christianity,* pp. 61–66.

22 Lactantius reported this incident in *Div Inst* IV. 27, and in *De Mort Pers* 10. 1–5=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 76–77. Since at least the second century, Christians had been marked with the cross during the baptismal initiatory rite, and told to invoke the name of Christ and use the sign of the cross to ward off daemonic influences—Hippolytus related this practice in his *Apostolic Tradition* 20–23, and Lactantius waxed eloquent on the power of Christian *signa* in his works.

23 The probable reasons were that Constantius was older and had more military and administrative experience; Diocletian was indebted to Constantius for his support in 285; and as the senior Augustus resided in the east, it probably seemed wise to place the senior Caesar in the west to placate the pride of Maximian and balance the power of the imperial college.

24 Both Lact., *De Mort Pers* 9–11, and Euseb., *Hist Eccl* VIII. Appendix 1, presented Galerius as the primary instigator of the "Great Persecution." Lact., *De Mort Pers* 9. 9–10, and 11. 1–2 recorded the ambition of Galerius for a higher imperial position, and the hatred of Romula for the Christians. The *Κατὰ Χριστιανῶν* of Porphyry of Tyre (*ca.* 270–300) was ordered to be destroyed by Christian emperors, but numerous fragments from it have survived in the refutations written by Christian scholars against it—these were collected and published by Adolph Harnack in "Porphyrius, *Gegen die Christen,* 15 Bücher, Zeugnisse, Fragmente und Referate" (Berlin, 1916), pp. 1–115. In *De Mort Pers* 16. 4 and *Div Inst* V. 2,

Lactantius mentioned Hierocles and other imperial officials and philosophers who were writing against and persecuting Christians in this period—for the careers of Porphyry and Hierocles, see *PLRE,* pp. 716–17, and 432. For modern analyses, consult: Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety,* pp. 108–9; Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution,* pp. 354–62; W.Den Boer, "A Pagan Historian and His Enemies: Porphyry Against the Christians," *CP,* vol. 69 (1974), pp. 198–208; T.D.Barnes, "Sossianus Hierocles and the Antecedents of the Great Persecution," *HSCP,* vol. 80 (1976), pp. 239–52; Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion,* pp. 246–77; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 18–22; W.H.C.Frend, "Prelude to the Great Persecution: The Propaganda War," *JEH,* vol. 38 (1987), pp. 1–18, and *Rise of Christianity,* pp. 440–44; and Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 163–75.

25 Euseb., *Hist Eccl* VIII. 1. 7 commented that "the persecution commenced with the brethren in the army" ("ἐκ τῶν ἐν στρατείαις ἀδελφῶν καταρχομένου τοῦ διωγμοῦ"), and in VIII. 4 detailed the purge carried out in the eastern legions. The *Acta Julii* is printed in Ruinart, *Acta Martyrum,* pp. 569–70, in Harnack, *Militia Christi,* pp. 119–21, and partially in Cadoux, *Early Church and the World,* p. 576. The *Acta Tarachi* in Ruinart, *Acta Martyrum,* pp. 451–52, and Cadoux, *Early Church and the World,* pp. 577 and 584–85, provided an example of a Christian soldier in Diocletian's region at first merely discharged, and only later martyred.

26 Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 19, recorded Constantine standing at the side of Diocletian while they were traveling through Palestine. The decree of Diocletian against the Manichees is contained in the *Mosaicarum et Romanarum legum collatio* 15. 3, published in *Fontes Iuri Romani Antejustiniani,* 2 (Florence, 1940). The persecution of Romanus the deacon at Antioch was recorded in Euseb., *De Martyribus Palaestinae* 2. On these incidents, see: P.R.L.Brown, "The Diffusion of Manichaeism in the Roman Empire," *JRS,* vol. 59 (1969), pp. 92–103; Barnes, "Sossianus Hierocles and the Antecedents of the Great Persecution," pp. 246–52, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 20–21; and Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 153–74.

27 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 10. 6–11. 8=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 77–78, recorded the Nicomedia meeting of Diocletian and Galerius, and seems to have had inside sources for their discussions. Constantine was present at court, and, in a later "Edict to the Provinces Concerning the Error of Polytheism" recorded in Euseb., *Vita Const* II. 49–52, he reported that he had heard the Apollonian response which led the eastern emperors to issue their "sanguinary edicts" against the Christians—a policy with which he claims to have had no sympathy. Dedications found at the sanctuary of Apollo in the names of Diocletian and Maximian indicate the imperial devotion to and belief in the oracle. For the Apollo temple inscriptions, see A.Rehm, "Kaiser Diokletian und das Heiligtum von Didyma," *Philologus,* vol. 93 (1938), pp. 74–84; and for modern assessments of the imperial decision to renew the persecutions, consult: Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution,* pp. 362–63, and *Rise of Christianity,* pp. 452–57; Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion,* pp. 248–9; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 18–21; Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 174–75; and Elliot, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 35–38, who posits that the start of the persecution in 303, not the conversion experience of 312, was the key turning point in Constantine's religious development.

28 *De Mort Pers* 9. 11: "Diocles…summa felicitate regnavit, quamdiu manus suas iustorum sanguine non inquinaret." Lactantius went on in *De Mort Pers* 12 and 13 to pinpoint the *Terminalia* of 303 as the beginning of the persecution, to describe the destruction of the Nicomedia church, and to list the loss of status and rights Christians suffered under the first edict—commenting that they no longer had freedom and the right of speech as citizens ("libertatem denique ac vocem non haberent"). Euseb., *Hist Eccl.* VIII. 2. 4 reported that "it was in the nineteenth year of the reign of Diocletian…that imperial edicts were published everywhere, commanding that the churches be leveled to the ground and the scriptures be

destroyed by fire, and ordering that those who held places of honor be degraded, and that the household servants, if they persisted in the profession of Christianity, be deprived of freedom." For modern commentary, consult: Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* vol. I, pp. 71–72; Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution,* p. 364, and *Rise of Christianity,* pp. 457–58; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 22–24; and Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 175–77.

29 The private religious beliefs of Constantius cannot be known with any certainty because of the lack of precise evidence pertaining thereto. The coin motifs he issued honored the Olympian gods favored by the Tetrarchy, and made him appear as a traditional pagan polytheist. However, these motifs were probably chosen by his colleagues and imposed upon him. Eusebius in the *Vita Constantini* presented him as a devotee of "the Supreme God," and very favorable to Christians in his court. Yet, this presentation owes much to Constantinian propaganda. A few artistic motifs, inscriptions, and early Constantinian panegyrics portrayed him as a favorite of the Sun god. But these beg different interpretations. What is certain from the contemporary evidence is that he did not follow his colleagues down the brutal road of repression and bloodshed during the "Great Persecution," and that his son inherited and extended this attitude of tolerance to Christians. For the view that he was a pagan monotheist or a religious syncretist with a special devotion to Sol as the "Highest Deity," see: Jacob Burckhardt, *Die Zeit Constantins des Grossen* (1852)= *The Age of Constantine the Great,* tr. by Moses Hadas (New York, 1949), pp. 190, 245, and 282; Piganiol, *L'empereur Constantin,* pp. 31–36; Alföldi, *Conversion of Constantine,* pp. 6–15; MacMullen, *Constantine,* p. 38; Charles Odahl, "Constantine's Conversion to Christianity," in Harold T.Parker, *Problems in European History* (Durham, 1979), pp. 6–9; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 12–13 and 36–37; and for a detailed analysis of the religious terminology Eusebius used in describing the beliefs of Constantius, see: Mark D.Smith, "Eusebius and the Religion of Constantius I," *Studia Patristica,* vol. 29 (1997), pp. 133–40.

30 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 13–16=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 78–81; and Euseb., *Hist Eccl VIII.* 2–13 provided general accounts of the "Great Persecution," and offered some specific details about the varied application of the persecution edicts across the Roman Empire between 303–5. The *Acta Martyrum,* various Donatist documents, and the *Liber Pontificalis* added other details. For modern analyses of the evidence, and narratives of the persecution, consult: Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution,* pp. 364–67, and *Rise of Christianity,* pp. 456–63; Chadwick, *Early Church,* pp. 121–24; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 22–24; and Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 175–85.

31 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 17 recorded the *Vicennalia* festivals in Rome and Nicomedia, and the illness Diocletian contracted on the return journey. *Paneg* VI (VII). 9. 2, *Paneg* VII (VI). 15. 6, Vict., *Caes* 39. 48, and Eutrop., *Brev* IX. 27 provided the evidence that Diocletian formulated a plan to retire, and forced Maximian to take an oath in the Temple of Capitoline Jupiter in November of 303 to agree to step down with him at the appropriate time. Lact., *De Mort Pers* 15. 3–16. 1, and Euseb. *Hist Eccl* VIII. 7–13, and *Mart Pal* 2ff. described Christian sufferings under the fourth edict. For modern scholarship on these issues, consult: H.P. L'Orange, "Ein tetrarchisches Ehrendenkmal auf dem Forum Romanum," *Römische Mitteilungen,* vol. 53 (1938), pp. 1–34, and *Art Forms and Civic Life in the Late Roman Empire,* pp. 45–46, and 66–68; Seston, *Dioclétien et la tétrarchie,* p. 187; Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution,* pp. 365–77, and *Rise of Christianity,* pp. 460–62; Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 56 and 59, and *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 24–25; and Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 186–89.

32 Sutherland, *RIC,* vol. VI, pp. 5, and 486–519, and Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 147–48 note the closing of the Thessalonica mint, and the opening of the Serdica mint in 303–4, indicating a northward movement by Galerius at this time. Lact., *De Mort Pers* 18 reported the threat Galerius made against Maximian, and his subsequent conference at Nicomedia urging Diocletian to retire and appoint Severus and Maximin Caesars, with the old emperor's warning at 18. 15; Vict., *Caes* 39. 48 suggested that Diocletian resigned because of the "excellence of his character" and because he foresaw another time of troubles

coming with which he did not wish to be associated. For modern commentary, see: Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 25–26; and Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 189–91.

33 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 19; Euseb., *Hist Eccl* VIII. 13. 11; *Origo* 1. 1 and 3. 5; Vict., *Caes* 39. 40–48. 1; Eutrop., *Brev* IX. 27–X. 1; Oros., *Hist* VII. 25. 14–16; and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 8 all provided information on the retirement of Diocletian and Maximian, and the creation of the Second Tetrarchy in 305. Lactantius reported that Diocletian went to his "native country," which Eutropius specified was "not far from Salonae" (at Spalatum—Split—on the southern coast of Croatia). Lactantius put the retirement of Maximian in Campania, but Eutropius located it in Lucania. For modern commentary on the retirements of 305 and the extant remains of Diocletian's palace at Split, see: Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 26–27; Kolb, *Diocletian und die Erste Tetrarchie,* pp. 128–58; L'Orange, *Art Forms and Civic Life in the Late Roman Empire,* pp. 70–79; Jerko and Tomislav Marasović, *Diocletian Palace* (Zagreb, 1970); and Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 191–94.

34 This summary of Constantine's life and career between 293–305 is based upon several precise references in the ancient sources and some reasonable assumptions from later events. (1) Left for the east as a tribune in 293: *Paneg* VI (VII). 6. 2—given the plumed helmet of an officer by Fausta; *Paneg* VI (VII). 5. 3—"cum per maximos tribunatus stipendia prima conficeres." (2) Early marriage to Minervina: *Paneg* VI (VII). 4. 1—"te ab ipso fine pueritiae ilico *matrimonii legibus* tradidisti, ut primo ingressu adulescentiae formares *animum maritalem*"; Vict., *Epitome* 41. 4, and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 20. 2—name Minervina. (3) Service in the Persian War with the eastern emperors: *Origo* 2. 2—"obses apud Diocletianum et Galerium, sub iisdem fortiter in Asia militavit;" and Const., *Oratio ad Coet* 16. 2—remembered seeing Babylon. (4) Son Crispus: *Origo* 5.19; Euseb., *Hist Eccl* X. 9. 4; Vict., *Caes* 41. 6; Vict., *Epitome* 41. 4; Oros., *Hist* VII. 28. 22—identified as the first son of Constantine from Minervina. (5) Connection between Helena and Crispus: Vict., *Epitome* 41. 11–12, and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 29. 1–2—mentioned great sorrow of Helena at the later death of her grandson. (6) Diocletian's esteem of Constantine: Lact., *De Mort Pers* 18. 11–Diocletian said "Hic vero et amabilis est et ita imperaturus, ut patre suo melior et clementior iudicetur." (7) Tour to Egypt with Diocletian: Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 19—sees Constantine at right hand of Diocletian on route to Egypt; and Const., *Oratio ad Coet* 16. 2—remembered seeing Memphis. (8) Rose through the ranks to *tribunus ordinis primi: Paneg* VII (VI). 3. 3—"stipendiis in ordinem meritis et militiae gradibus emensis"; and Lact., *De Mort Pers* 18. 10—"eratque tunc praesens iam pridem a Diocletiano factus tribunus ordinis primi." (9) In Nicomedia for start of the persecution: Lact., *De Mort Pers* 11, Const., *Oratio ad Coet* 25, and Euseb., *Vita Const* II. 49–52—Lactantius described the scene, and Constantine recalled the Apollonian oracular response and the start of the "sanguinary edicts." (10) Galerius opposed a Caesarship for Constantine, and set traps for him: Lact., *De Mort Pers* 18. 11; 24. 4–5—"Nam et in insidiis saepe iuvenem adpetiverat…sub obtentu exercitii ac lusus feris illum obiecerat, sed frustra, quoniam dei manus hominem protegebat"; Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 20; and *Origo* 2. 3—"sed hunc Galerius obiecit ante pluribus periculis. Nam et in Sarmatas iuvenis equestris militans ferocem barbarum, capillis tentis raptum, ante pedes Galerii imperatoris adduxerat." Barnes, in *New Empire,* pp. 39–44, and *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 25–27, tabulates and summarizes much of this evidence. He suggests that the Sarmatian swamp episode might have occurred in 299, and Constantine might have gone to Rome with Diocletian in 303—the sources clearly set the former in the later period when Diocletian was not available to protect Constantine (304–5), and there is no evidence for the latter. Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 11–14, has some interesting and sensible comments on Constantine's attitudes to the persecution in this period.

35 Williams, *Diocletian* (London, 1985) is still the best narrative of the Diocletianic Era—for a review of the 1997 reprint by Routledge, see: Charles Odahl, *AncW,* vol. 29, 2 (1998), pp. 175–76.

Notes to Chapter IV

1 For the rise of Constantine as an emperor in the west and the political and military convulsions of the Second Tetrarchy between 305 and 311, the first three Latin panegyrics given in honor of Constantine in Gaul—*Paneg* VI (VII), VII (VI), and VIII (V), and the *De Mortibus Persecutorum* of Lactantius—provided the most detailed contemporary literary evidence. Some important bits of information were also recorded in the early pages of Eusebius' *Vita Constantini,* and the *Origo Constantini Imperatoris,* and the political-military narratives of Eutropius, Aurelius Victor, the *Epitome* of Victor, Orosius, and the *Historia Nova* of Zosimus. To these literary sources can be added the extensive imperial coinage from the period, and some important archaeological remains in places like York, Trier, and Autun which were ruled by Constantine after 306. Among the useful modern studies on Constantine, with chapters on his pre-Christian rule as an emperor in Gaul from 306 to 312, are Alföldi, *Conversion of Constantine,* pp. 5–15; Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 56–72; MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 32–53; Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 14–26; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 29–43; and Grünewald, *Constantinus Maximus Augustus,* pp. 13–61; however, see Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 60–71, for the most accurate chronology of this period.

2 Most of this material is found in chapters 20 through 23 of Lact., *De Mort Pers,* with some key quotes as follows: 20. 1—"[Galerius] postquam senibus expulsis quod voluit effecit, se iam totius orbis dominum esse rebatur. Nam Constantium quamvis priorem nominari esset necesse, contemnebat, quod et natura mitis esset et valitudine corporis impeditus." 21. 1—"Adeptus igitur maximam potestatem ad vexandum orbem, quem sibi patefecerat, animum intendit." 22. 1–2—"Quae igitur in Christianis excruciandis didicerat, consuetudine ipsa in omnes exercebat. Nulla poena penes eum levis, non insulae, non carceres, non metella, sed ignis, crux, ferae in illo erant cotidiana et facilia." 23. 1—"At vero illud publicae calamitatis et communis luctus omnium fuit, census in provincias et civitates semel missus. Censitoribus ubique diffusis et omnia exagitantibus hostilis tumultus et captivitatis horrendae species erant." Earlier in *De Mort Pers* 9. 2, Lactantius had called Galerius a "beast," and described him thus: "Inerat huic bestiae naturalis barbaries, efferitas a Romano sanguine aliena." In 22. 4 he recorded the emperor's disdain for literature and eloquence; and in 21. 5–6 recounted his hobby of collecting bears and feeding people to them. And finally in 25. 1, he called him a *bestia mala*. Lactantius drew from both pagan oracular and Christian apocalyptic traditions when he referred to the persecuting emperors as *bestiae malae,* and threatened them with the *ultio Dei,* the "revenge of God" for their misuse of power in the *Div Inst* V. 23–24, and VII. 14–16, which he wrote in the west after Galerius took over in 305 and increased the persecutions in the east. For a useful treatment of the threats of the revenge of God against the beastly persecutors in the *Divine Institutes* and the expression of vengeance fulfilled in the *Deaths of the Persecutors,* see: Baynes, "Lactantius, the *Divine Institutes*" in *Byzantine Studies,* pp. 348–54; and for the employment of apocalyptic language and imagery in other writers of the time, such as Victorinus of Pattau, Eusebius of Caesarea, and even Constantine himself, see: Ethelbert Stauffer, *Christ and the Caesars* (Phildelphia, PA, 1955), p. 261; Charles Odahl, "The Use of Apocalyptic Imagery in Constantine's Christian Propaganda," *Centerpoint,* vol. 4, 3 (1981), pp. 9–19; and Chesnut, *First Christian Histories,* pp. 164–74.

3 *Origo* 2. 2 characterized Constantine as an *obses* ("hostage") at the courts of Diocletian and Galerius, and reported that after the retirement of Diocletian, "Galerius exposed Constantine to many dangers." Vict., *Caes* 40. 2 also employed the term *obses* to describe the situation of Constantine in the retinue of Galerius; while Lact., *De Mort Pers* 25. 4–5 and Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 20–21 mentioned the "snares" or "plots" laid against him.

4 The military victories of Constantius were chronicled in the previous chapter. His reputation for a fair and mild rule was recorded by Christian and pagan authors alike, as in Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 13; and Eutrop., *Brev* X. 1. The names and evidence for his three sons and three daughters from Theodora (Flavius Delmatius, Julius Constantius, Hannibalianus, Constantia,

Anastasia, and Eutropia) are listed in Barnes, *New Empire,* p. 37. The early career of Constantine was recorded in the previous chapter. Lact., *De Mort Pers* 19. 3–5 reported that the soldiers and officials present at the announcement of the new Caesars in Nicomedia "were all thunderstruck" ("Obstupefiunt omnes") when Constantine was passed over in favor of Severus and Maximin. Vict., *Caes* 40. 2 described Constantine as "agitated by a desire for ruling" since his youth; while virtually all the ancient sources reported on his qualifications to be an emperor, as e.g., Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 19.

5 The official nomenclature for the members of the Second Tetrarchy appeared on imperial coinage, with gold aurei issued from the major mint cities with or near to an imperial residence (Trier, Ticinum, Aquileia, Serdica, Nicomedia, Antioch, and Alexandria); and bronze folles issued from these and other active mints (Londinium, Lugdunum, Rome, Carthago, Siscia, Sirmium, Heraclea, and Cyzicus); very little silver was issued in this era—see Sutherland, *RIC,* vol. VI, *passim;* and Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 149–57 for the coinage data. Eutrop., *Brev* X. 1–2, and Oros., *Hist* VII. 25. 15–16 suggested that Constantius voluntarily gave up control of Italy and Africa, and allowed Galerius to appoint Severus as Caesar over these areas; but it is obvious from Lact., *De Mort Pers* 18–23 that Diocletian and Galerius forced the new Caesars upon Constantius. For the outwardly peaceful but inwardly unstable political situation at the start of the Second Tetrarchy, see: Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 192–95; and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 25–27.

6 Lactantius was probably still in the east in mid-305, and seems to have had inside sources for this story which he recorded in *De Mort Pers* 25. 3–5=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 83–84.

7 *Origo* 4. 11 related that Galerius was such a heavy drinker in the evenings ("ebriosus…temulentus") that he instructed his prefect to confirm any orders he had given "post prandium" the next morning. Christian and pagan sources alike reported the dramatic flight of Constantine from the court of Galerius to the entourage of his father—Lact., *De Mort Pers* 25. 5–8; Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 20–21; *Origo* 2. 4; *Paneg* VII (VI). 7–8; Vict., *Caes* 40. 2–4 and *Epitome* 41. 2; and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 8. Though some of these sources telescoped events by having Constantine only reach his father on his deathbed in Britain, it is clear from *Paneg* VII (VI) and the *Origo* that he joined Constantius in Gaul in the summer of 305, campaigned with him in northern Britain in that year, and was with him till he died in York during the summer of 306, as per the *Origo* 2. 4:

> Tunc eum Galerius patri remisit. Qui ut Severum per Italiam transiens vitaret, summa festinatione veredis post se truncatis Alpes transgressus, ad patrem Constantium venit apud Bononiam, quam Galli prius Gesoriacum vocabant. Post victoriam autem Pictorum Constantius pater Eboraci mortuus est, et Constantinus omnium militum consensu Caesar creatus.

Most scholars have accepted the story of Constantine's flight to his father as a real event, as e.g., Burckhardt, *Age of Constantine,* p. 251; Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 57–58; MacMullen, *Constantine,* p. 32; and Pohlsander, *The Emperor Constantine,* pp. 14–15. A few revisionists, such as Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 27; Creed, *Lactantius,* p. 105, and Nixon and Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors,* pp. 228–29, have tried to write it off as later propaganda. The latter view is unlikely due to the facts that (1) the story is reported so

widely in both Christian and pagan sources alike; (2) it fits the circumstances of the time; and (3) the actions within it are characteristic of Constantine.

8 *Origo* 2. 4, and *Paneg* VII (VI). 7–8 recorded the campaign in northern Britain; and a military diploma dated to 7 January 306 listing the senior emperors with a "Brittanicus II" victory title indicates that it must have taken place in the second half of the year 305—for the diploma, see: Barnes, "Imperial Campaigns, A.D. 285–311, pp. 189–91. H.H.Scullard, *Roman Britain: Outpost of Empire* (London, 1979), p. 69; Johnson, *Late Roman Fortifications,* pp. 132–33; and Sheppard Frere, *Britannia: A History of Roman Britain,* 3rd ed. (London, 1987), pp. 330–36, deal with the military and urban reconstruction work in the Constantinian era.

9 The quotations on the mild rule of Constantius are from Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 13, and Eutrop., *Brev* X. 1. On his application of the persecution edicts, Lact., *De Mort Pers* 15. 7 reported that

> Constantius, in order that he might not appear to disagree with the orders of his seniors, allowed the churches—that is walls, which could be restored—to be destroyed, but the true temple of God, which is in men, he kept unharmed.

In *Vita Const* I. 17, Eusebius portrayed Constantius as a devotee of "the supreme God" ("θεός . . . ἐπὶ πάντων"), and nearly a Christian in his private life. He was not the latter, as Elliott has recently posited in *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 17–27; but he was more tolerant than his co-emperors in his public religious policies, and may have been a syncretist searching for a "Highest Deity" in his private beliefs as Constantine and Eusebius later related (*Vita Const* I. 17 and 27). For the religious terminology which Eusebius applied to Constantius, see again Smith, "Eusebius and the Religion of Constantius I." On these issues, see also the analyses of Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 19–20, where he argued that in both governing style and religious tendencies, "Constantine proved himself his father's son."

10 The ancient sources for the acclamation of Constantine are *Paneg* VII (VI). 7–9; Lact., *De Mort Pers* 24. 8–9; Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 21–22; *Origo* 2. 4; Vict., *Caes* 40. 2–4; Eutrop., *Brev* X. 1–2; Vict., *Epitome* 41. 1–3; Oros., *Hist* VII. 25. 16; Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 2. 1; Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 9; various inscriptions in CIL, vol. I, pp. 268–69; and *Chronica Minora* 1. 231. For modern accounts, see: Burckhardt, *Age of Constantine,* pp. 251–53; Piganol, *L'empereur Constantin,* pp. 41–42; Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 57–58; MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 38–39; Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* p. 19; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 27; Grant, *Constantine the Great,* p. 23; and Pohlsander, *The Emperor Constantine,* p. 15. For York and its Minster, consult: Frere, *Britannia,* pp. 334–36; *Roman York* (York, 1971); A.L.Laishley, *The City of York and the Minster* (York, 1971); and Keith Spence, *Cathedrals and Abbeys of England and Wales* (New York, 1984), pp. 264–69.

11 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 25. 1–5=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 84–85:

> Paucis post diebus laureata imago eius adlata est ad malam bestiam. Deliberavit diu an susciperet. In eo paene res fuit, ut illam et ipsum qui attulerat exureret, nisi eum amici ab illo furore flexissent admonentes eum periculi, quod universi milites, quibus invitis ignoti Caesares erant facti, suscepturi Constantinum fuissent atque ad eum concursuri alacritate summa, si venisset armatus. Suscepit itaque imaginem admodum invitus atque ipsi purpuram misit, ut ultro ascivisse illum in societatem videretur…. Sed illud excogitavit, ut Severum, qui erat aetate maturior, Augustum nuncuparet, Constantinum vero non imperatorem, sicut erat factus, sed Caesarem cum Maximino appellari iuberet, ut eum de secundo loco reiceret in quartum.

Cf. *Paneg* VI (VII). 5. 3, and *Paneg* VII (VI). 8. 2 which confirmed that Constantine referred his elevation to his seniors, and was at first content to accept the title of Caesar. For his early appearance on coins throughout the empire, see: Sutherland, *RIC,* vol. VI, esp. Londinium, pp. 126–30; Treveri, pp. 202–9; Serdica, pp. 495–97; Nicomedia, pp. 559–61; Antiochia, pp. 625–29; and Alexandria, pp. 671–76; and Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 149–57. And for modern assessments of the dilemma of Galerius and the sagacity of Constantine after the latter's acclamation in the summer of 306, consult: MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 38–39; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 28–29; and Grünewald, *Constantinus Maximus Augustus,* pp. 13–16.

12 Scullard, *Roman Britain,* p. 69, and Frere, *Britannia,* pp. 334–36, record the military reconstruction projects in this period, and report that six milestones date from the early months of Constantine's rule in Britain. *Roman York,* pp. 25–27, illustrates many of the Roman artifacts in the Yorkshire Museum, including the "Head of the Emperor Constantine"—which is described in detail in *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the City of York,* vol. I: Eburacum, Roman York (York, 1962), p. 112. It may be interesting to note that the York Civic Trust recently commissioned a 1.6-meter-high bronze statue of a seated Constantine by the modern artist Philip Jackson, and that this statue was placed on top of a 1.8-meter-high stone plinth in front of the south transcept door of York Minster on 25 July 1998 to commemorate the acclamation of Constantine near that site almost 1,700 years ago—*The Times* (July 25, 1998), "News," p. 6. This statue is located very close to the site of the ancient one.

13 The defeat of the Franks early in Constantine's reign was recorded in *Paneg* VI (VII). 4; *Paneg* VII (VI). 10–11; *Paneg* X (IV). 16; Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 25; and Eutrop., *Brev* X. 3—with the names of kings captured and punished at Trier mentioned in *Paneg* VII (VI). 11.5. Barnes, "Imperial Campaigns, A.D. 285–311, pp. 191–93, *New Empire,* pp. 69 and 256–58, and *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 29 and 298, adds the data from victory titles. For Constantinian construction programs in Trier and Gaul, consult: *Paneg* VII (VI). 22; Wheeler, *Roman Art and Architecture,* pp. 71–76; Edith Mary Wightman, *Roman Trier and the Treveri* (New York, 1971), pp. 58–59, and 92–113, and *Gallia Belgica* (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 234–37; and Anthony King, *Roman Gaul and Germany* (Berkeley, 1990), pp. 182–85.

14 *Paneg* VI (VII). 3. 4: "Neque enim forma tantum in te patris, Constantine, sed etiam continentia, fortitudo, iustitia, prudentia sese…praesentant"; and Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 19, and 22. This was, of course, the image which Constantine wanted to project as he established his right to rule and built a base of power in Gaul.

15 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 24. 9=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* p. 84: "Suscepto imperio Constantinus Augustus nihil egit prius quam Christianos cultui ac deo suo reddere. Haec fuit prima eius sanctio sanctae religionis restitutae." Cf. *Div Inst* I. 1. 13 where he claimed that Constantine was the "first of the Roman princes to repudiate errors, and to acknowledge and honor the majesty of the one and only true God," and to make an "excellent beginning" by "restoring justice" to the Christians at the start of his imperial rule. Although Lactantius was the only ancient source for the early religious toleration ruling of Constantine, no other sources contradicted him. Barnes, "Lactantius and Constantine," pp. 43–46, defends the truthfulness of the Lactantian assertion, and Creed, *Lactantius,* pp. 105–6, accepts it as well. In light of the desire of Constantine to obtain confirmation of his imperial rule from Galerius, and of the tactical brilliance he used during the political turmoils of the Second Tetrarchy, it is probably best to assume that he waited until after he had received recognition as a Caesar from the eastern Augustus before he issued his executive order giving toleration to the Christians in his area. It is impossible to determine with precision the movements of Lactantius during the "Great Persecution," but most modern commentators would place him in the west (Gaul and North Africa) between 305–311—Stevenson, "Life and Literary Activity of Lactantius," pp. 661–77; Barnes, "Lactantius and Constantine," pp. 40–41; Creed, *Lactantius,* pp. xxv– xxvii; Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 67–68; and Digeser, *Making of a Christian Empire,* pp. 133–35.

16 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 26. 1–4=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 85–86, and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 9 provided the most data for the usurpation of Maxentius; but see also *Origo* 3. 6; Vict., *Caes* 40. 5; Eutrop., *Brev* X. 2. 3; Vict., *Epitome* 40. 2; and Oros., *Hist* VII. 28. 5. For modern appraisals, consult Jones, *Constantine,* p. 59; Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 20–21; and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 29–30.

17 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 26. 4–10=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 86–87; *Origo* 3. 6, and 4. 9–10; Vict., *Caes* 40. 6–7; Eutrop., *Brev* X. 2; Oros., *Hist* VII. 28. 6–8; and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 10. Several of these sources were confused about the time or place of Severus' death, but *Origo* 4. 10 made it clear that he was killed only when Galerius invaded Italy in the late summer of 307—cf. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 30; and Creed, *Lactantius,* pp. 107–8.

18 Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 25 mentioned an early visit of Constantine "to the British nations"; Sutherland, *RIC,* vol. VI, p. 129, # 82, records an ADVENTUS AUGG follis for a visit of Constantine to the island in 307; and Frere, *Britannia,* p. 336, indicates that besides the six milestones dating from Constantine's initial visit to Britain in 306, there are thirteen others from roads repaired later in his reign. For the Danube campaigns of Galerius between 306–11, see Barnes, "Imperial Campaigns, A.D. 285–311," pp. 191–93, and *New Empire,* pp. 64, and 256–57.

19 Lactantius, in *De Mort Pers* 27. 1 mentioned the fortification of Rome ("urbe munita")—while building lines on the Aurelian Wall reveal its heightening at this time; and recorded the mission of Maximian "in Galliam" to win Constantine for his cause with "suae minoris filiae nuptiis." The Gallic orator of *Paneg* VI (VII) specified in Ch. 1. 1 that he composed the speech to celebrate the promotion of Constantine from Caesar to the "nomen imperii," and to commemorate the "nuptiae caelestes" by which he was being married to Fausta. The coins issued by the mints of Constantine from the fall of 307 forward listed him with the title AUGUSTUS and honored Fausta as NOBILISSIMA FEMINA—see Sutherland, *RIC,* vol. VI, esp. Trier, pp. 215–19. Although the spring of 307 was preferred as the time of the speech by Galletier, *Panégyriques latins,* pp. 3–4, and Arles was recently suggested as the site of the nuptials by Grünewald, *Constantinus Maximus Augustus,* pp. 33–41, the

involvement of Maximian in the capture of Severus and the initial phases of the fortification of Rome, and the journey of Constantine to Britain through the first half of 307, make an early date and a southern location for the marriage ceremony unlikely. Barnes, *New Empire,* p. 69, and *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 31; and Nixon and Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors,* pp. 178–85 insist on a late summer date; and they along with Galletier, *Panégyriques latins,* p. 4; Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* p. 21; and Pohlsander, *The Emperor Constantine,* p. 15 favor Trier as the location. For commentaries on *Paneg* VI (VII), consult: Galletier, ibid., pp. 3–15; MacCormick, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity,* pp. 177–79; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 31; Nixon and Rodgers, ibid., pp. 178–90; and C.E.V.Nixon, "Constantinus Oriens Imperator: Propaganda and Panegyric. On Reading Panegyric 7 (307)," *Historia,* vol. 42, 2 (1993), pp. 229–46. Nixon emphasizes that the Gallic rhetor was more familiar with Maximian and Constantius than Constantine, and that his panegyric echoed "tetrarchic" more than Constantinian themes.

20 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 27. 2–8, and *Origo* 3. 6–7, and 4. 10 provided the most detailed and accurate accounts of the Italian invasion of Galerius, while the later epitomies were much less valuable. Cf. the modern narratives of Williams, *Diocletian,* p. 195; and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 31.

21 For the coins of the Constantinian mints in 307–308, see: Sutherland, *RIC,* vol. VI, Londinium, pp. 131–32, Treveri, pp. 215–19, and Lugdunum, pp. 259–65; and Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 150–51. Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 10. 6, recorded that Maximian tried to get Constantine to attack the Galerian army. *Paneg* VII (VI). 12 and 13 celebrated the raid on the Bructeri and bridge over the Rhine in 308; while Lact., *De Mort Pers* 29. 3–8 recorded the campaign against the Franci in 310; with Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 25 hinting at these operations. For the victory titles in texts and on inscriptions which reflect these campaigns, consult: Barnes, "Imperial Campaigns, A.D. 285–311," p. 192, "The Victories of Constantine," *ZPE,* vol. 20 (1976), pp. 149–51, and *New Empire,* p. 70. And for the building programs in Trier and other Gallic cities, see again: Wheeler, *Roman Art and Architecture,* pp. 71–76; Wightman, *Roman Trier and the Treveri,* pp. 58–59, and 92–113, and *Gallia Belgica,* pp. 234–37; and King, *Roman Gaul and Germany,* pp. 182–85. Dörries in *Constantine the Great,* p. 20, commented that "Constantine was quietly building up Gaul and strengthening his own position" as the Second Tetrarchy disintegrated; and Williams in *Diocletian,* p. 195, summed up the opinion of many modern scholars when he wrote that in the "poker game of alliances and counter-alliances" in this period "Constantine was to prove himself the most patient and astute."

22 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 28–29. 1; Eutrop., *Brev* X. 3. 1–2; and Oros., *Hist* VII. 28. 9 provided the basic narrative for the expulsion of Maximian from Italy; while Vict., *Caes* 40. 17, and *Epitome* 40. 2, 6, and 20 mentioned the African revolt of Alexander; with Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 10–14 providing some confused material on both topics. Cf. Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 13–15.

23 See Sutherland, *RIC,* vol. VI, *passim;* and Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 150–57 for the coinage data.

24 Lact. *De Mort Pers* 24. 1 wrote of the "iudicium Dei" against Galerius during these years, and in 29. 1–2 described the Council of Carnuntum, and the appointment of Licinius; *Origo* 5. 13 indicated that Licinius was a native of "Nova Dacia," and that he was made "emperor" by Galerius for the purpose of "fighting Maxentius." Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 10–11 specified the place of the conference, and indicated that Maximian tried to get Diocletian to resume the purple; Vict., *Epitome* 39. 6 reported Diocletian's response—"'Utinam Salonae possetis visere olera nostris manibus instituta, profecto numquam istud temptandum iudicaretis'"; and the *Chronica Minora* 1. 231 provided the date of the elevation of Licinius; while Euseb., *Hist Eccl* VIII. 13. 14, Vict., *Caes* 40. 8, Eutrop., *Brev* X. 4. 1, and Oros., *Hist* VII. 28. 11 just briefly mentioned the elevation of Licinius. Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 43–44, lists the ancient sources for the background and career of Licinius; while Williams, *Diocletian,* p.

196; and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 32, describe and analyze the purposes of the Conference at Carnuntum.

25 Aurelius Victor mentioned the Pannonian reclamation project in *Caes* 40. 9. The victory titles employed by Galerius in his edict of toleration for the Christians in the spring of 311 as recorded in Euseb., *Hist Eccl* VIII. 17, and in some contemporary inscriptions, as well as a few references in *Paneg* VII (VI), and Lact., *De Mort Pers* provided the basis for the military history of the era—for which see: Barnes, "Imperial Campaigns, A.D. 285–311," pp. 189–93, and *New Empire,* pp. 64–70, 80–81, and 256–58.

26 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 32 recorded the demand of Maximin for Augustan rank, the Galerian compromise of "Filii Augustorum," and his capitulation to four Augusti. The changing coin inscriptions for the emperors in their key mints from late 308 to 311 reflect this story, as seen in Sutherland, *RIC,* vol. VI, Treveri, pp. 215–28; Thessalonica, pp. 513–19; Nicomedia, pp. 561–68; Antioch, pp. 626–44; and Alexandria, pp. 676–86; and in Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 149–57. The terms "Third" or "Fourth Tetrarchy" are sometimes used in the scholarly literature to refer to the changes in western Augusti after the death of Constantius in 306 (Severus, 306–7, and Licinius, 308–10); but it is probably best to use the term "Second Tetrarchy" for the period from 305–10 since Galerius was the dominant personality throughout these years. The term tetrarchy becomes inaccurate thereafter, for as Barnes notes in *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 33, "The promotion of Maximinus and Constantine spelled the end of the successive imperial colleges of two Augusti and two Caesars"; or as Williams writes in *Diocletian,* p. 197, "What had been a genuine fourfold monarchy was now simply an armed truce between distant power centres,… and…all the dignity of the Jovian and Herculian houses now seemed increasingly just a brittle veneer over the old carve-up of the Empire between rival generals."

27 Lact., in *Div Inst* V. 2 referred to the philosophers and officials who were aiding the persecuting emperors in their attacks on Christianity, and in *De Mort Pers* 16 recorded the tortures of Donatus under Hierocles and other governors; and Euseb., in *Hist Eccl* VIII and *De Mart Pal* recounted the sufferings and martyrdoms he witnessed in the southeastern provinces of the empire (with Pamphilus mentioned in *De Mart Pal* 11). Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety,* Ch. IV, discusses "The Dialogue of Paganism with Christianity" in this era; Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus* (University Park, PA, 1995), analyzes the "new synthesis of cult and philosophy" in the works of the Syrian Neoplatonist Iamblichus—for which, see the review by Charles Odahl in CH, vol. 66, 3 (1997), pp. 541–42; while Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution,* pp. 377–92 still offers the best narrative history of the persecutions from 306–13. Maximin was the most brutal persecutor of the Second Tetrarchy, and appears to have made an intelligent effort to build a "pagan church" with a priestly hierarchy and organized rituals which could compete with Christianity. For his imperial reign and religious policies, see: Helmut Castritius, *Studien zu Maximinus Daia* in *FAS,* Heft 2 (Kallmünz, 1969); and Oliver Nicholson, "The 'Pagan Churches' of Maximinus Daia and Julian the Apostate," *JEH,* vol. 45, 1 (1994), pp. 1–10.

28 For the repression of the revolt in Africa, and the brutal and expensive rule of Maxentius in Italy, see Vict., *Caes* 40; *Epitome* 40; Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 12–14; and Euseb., *Hist Eccl* VIII. 14. 1–6, and *Vita Const* I. 33–36 for the ancient literary sources. Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 14–15, adds some epigraphic evidence from Africa, and argues for the suppression of Alexander in 309 rather than later as some earlier scholars thought.

29 Lact. *De Mort Pers* 29 and 30=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 87–88 provided the most detailed ancient account of the revolt and death of Maximian. The "admirabili celeritate" phrase he used at 29. 6 to describe the speed of Constantine's army in 310 is a twin for the "incredibili celeritate" wording he had used at 24. 8 to characterize the flight of Constantine in 305; *Origo* 2. 4 also characterized Constantine as capable of employing "summa festinatio." On the death of Maximian, cf. *Paneg* VII (VI). 14–20; Euseb., *Hist Eccl* VIII. 13.

15, and *Vita Const* I. 47. 1; Vict., *Caes* 40. 21–22; Eutrop., *Brev* 10. 3; Oros., *Hist* VII. 28. 9; and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 10–11 for the ancient sources; and see Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* p. 22; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 34–35; and Williams, *Diocletian,* p. 197 for modern accounts.

30 The Claudian ancestry is in *Paneg* VII (VI). 2. 1–3. 1:

> Ab illo enim divo Claudio manat in te avita cognatio, qui Romani imperii solutam et perditam disciplinam primus reformavit, immanesque Gothorum copias Ponti faucibus et Histri ore proruptas terra marique delevit,…ab illo generis auctore in te imperii fortuna descendit. Quin immo ipsum patrem tuum vetus illa imperatoriae domus praerogativa provexit, ut iam summo gradu et supra humanarum rerum fata consisteres, post duos familiae tuae principes tertius imperator. Inter omnes, inquam, participes maiestatis tuae hoc habes, Constantine, praecipuum, quod imperator es natus…. Non fortuita hominum consensio, non repentinus aliquis favoris eventus te principem fecit: imperium nascendo meruisti.

The praise of Constantius and Constantine in the central sections of the oration were in *Paneg* VII (VI). 3–20. And the vision at the Apollo temple was recorded *in Paneg* VII (VI). 21–23:

> Ipse hoc sic ordinante Fortuna ut te ibi rerum tuarum felicitas admoneret dis immortalibus ferre quae voveras, ubi deflexisses adtemplum toto orbe pulcherrimum, immo ad praesentem, ut vidisti, deum. Vidisti enim, credo, Constantine, Apollinem tuum comitante Victoria coronas tibi laureas offerentem, quae tricenum singulae ferunt omen annorum. Hic est enim humanarum numerus aetatum quae tibi utique debentur. … Et—immo quid dico “credo”?—vidisti teque in illius specie recognovisti, cui totius mundi regna deberi vatum carmina divina cecinerunt.

31 The panegyrist of 310 was the earliest extant ancient source to mention Claudian ancestry for Constantine, but only with the ambiguous phrase “avita cognatio” (“an ancestral relationship”). This relationship was advertized on Constantinian inscriptions and coins, and mentioned in several fourth-century writings, such as the *Origo Constantini Imperatoris,* the *Breviarium* of Eutropius, two panegyrics by Julian the Apostate, and several biographies in the *Historia Augusta,* but with varied information on the nature of the relationship—that Constantius was a son, grandson, or grandnephew of Claudius. The lateness of the first reference, and the differences in the sources have caused some modern scholars to doubt the relationship, and to label it a fraud, or propaganda, e.g., Ronald Syme, “The Ancestry of Constantine,” *BHAC* 1971 (1974), pp. 237–53, rept. in the *Historia Augusta Papers* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 63–79; and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 35–37. Such may be the case. If Constantius, however, was a grandnephew of Claudius through a younger sister or brother of the emperor (as the usually reliable *Origo* 1. 2 states—“Constantius, divi Claudii optimi principis nepos ex fratre”), such a relationship might explain his preferment to the elite *Protectores* at the beginning of his military career. Since he was rather young and his connection to Claudius rather distant when the latter died in 270, he would not have been able to claim the imperial throne at that time. His own talents and his connections to rising

Illyrian soldiers later got him into the First Tetrarchy; and as membership in it was based on personal merit and loyalty to Diocletian, it would have been imprudent to claim a right of dynastic succession to the imperial title between 293 and 306. But with the disintegration of the Galerian tetrarchy and the rebellion of Maximian, recalling and employing the long distant and almost forgotten imperial ancestry would have been a useful propaganda move by Constantine in 310. And it is surely understandable that he might not have even remembered the precise nature of the distant relationship. How many people today can name and clearly identify all of their great-great-aunts and uncles? The fact that no ancient sources, even those hostile to Constantine, tried to refute his claim of Claudian ancestry, should make scholars hesitant to completely rule it out.

32 Many modern scholars have seen the "Apollonian vision" of 310 as a key stage in the religious development of Constantine, as e.g., R.Pichon, *Les derniers écrivains profanes,* pp. 98–108; J.Maurice, "Les discours des Panegyrici Latini et l'évolution religieuse sous le règne de Constantin," *CRAI* (1909), pp. 165–79; Camille Jullian, *Histoire de la Gaule,* vol. 7 (Paris, 1926), p. 106; Norman H.Baynes, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 5–6; Piganiol, *L'empereur Constantin,* pp. 48–75; and J.R.Palanque, *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire* (New York, 1953), pp. 20–24. Others, such as Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 23–24; Barbara S.Rodgers, "Constantine's Pagan Vision," *Byzantion,* vol. 50 (1980), pp. 259–78; and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 36–37, have noted that the references to "the divine songs of the bards," and to "the youthful, joyous, healing, and most handsome one" who is to come, might also have compared Constantine to the promised world ruler of Vergil's messianic *Eclogue* IV and his prophecies in the *Aeneid,* and thus associated him with Augustus and another "Golden Age." Although the Gallic panegyrist emphasized Apollo, it is clear from imperial coins and contemporary writings that Constantine was associating himself specifically with *Sol Invictus,* the "Highest Deity" of the earlier Illyrian emperors, and the favorite god of Constantius and his ancestors.

33 For Sol as the ancestral divinity of the Flavians, see: Jules Maurice, *Numismatique constantinienne,* vol. II, (1911), pp. xx–xlviii, where he commented "Le culte solaire de la dynastie des seconds Flaviens aurait ainsi pris naissance en Illyrie sous Claude II et aurait été pratiqué en Gaule par Constance Chlore au milieu de peuples auxquels la religion d'Apollon était familière. II aurait été reconnu par Constantin, en 310, avant sa conversion, comme le culte traditionnel, héréditaire, de sa dynastie" (p. xxxvi); Baynes, *Constantine the Great,* p. 6; Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* p. 24, who wrote "Constantine's break with Maximian also resulted in the repudiation of his god Hercules and the adoption instead of the cult of the sun god, who had been worshipped by the emperor Claudius and, in a measure also, by Constantius. But the cult of the sun god also contained a claim to universal monarchy. Again, religious and political motifs were inextricably combined"; Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion,* pp. 279–91; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 36–37; and Grünewald, *Constantinus Maximus Augustus,* pp. 46–61. For the appearance of *Sol Invictus* on Constantine's coins from 310 forward, see: Sutherland, *RIC,* vol. VI, pp. 132–40 (Londinium), 226–28 (Treveri), and 265 (Lugdunum); and Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 150–57.

34 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 31–35=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 88–89 provided the most detailed account of the disease and death of Galerius; other accounts were found in Euseb., *Hist Eccl* VIII. 16. and *Vita Const* I. 57; *Origo* 3.8; Vict., *Caes* 40. 9 and *Epitome* 40. 4; Oros., *Hist* VII. 28. 12–13; and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 11. Jones, *Constantine,* p. 66, suggested cancer of the bowels as the disease which killed Galerius; but Dr. Eric Maier of the Mountain View Medical Center in Boise has analyzed the ancient accounts with me, and sees penile squamous cell carcinoma as more likely. Lact., *De Mort Pers* 34, and Euseb., *Hist Eccl* VIII. 17 recorded the toleration edict of 311. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 39, cautions that "the novelty or importance of this measure should not be overestimated" since the Christians of Italy and Africa already had the toleration which Galerius was

offering those of the east; and the Christians of Gaul, Britain and Spain had been granted even more. For the *ultio Dei* with which Lactantius was threatening the persecutors, see: *Div Inst* I. 1, and V. 23–24; Baynes, "Lactantius, the *Divine Institutes*" pp. 348–54; and Odahl, "Use of Apocalyptic Imagery," p. 12.

35 For the military alliances and death of Diocletian in 311, see: Lact., *De Mort Pers* 36–43; Euseb., *Hist Eccl* VIII. 17–IX. 8; *Origo* 5. 13; and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 15–17; and Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 31–32, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 41; and Williams, *Diocletian,* pp. 199–200.

Notes to Chapter V

1 The contemporary Christian sources for the conversion of Constantine and the victories of Constantine and Licinius over Maxentius and Maximin in 312–13 were the *De Mortibus Persecutorum* of Lactantius, and the *Historia Ecclesiastica* and *Vita Constantini* of Eusebius. They provided a few military details, but concentrated on the religious aspects of the campaigns. Contemporary pagan sources for these events were *Panegyrici* IX (XII) and X (IV), and the *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* (which may have been written by a Christian layman, or at least contains some Christian interpolations). They hinted at the religious aspects of the conflicts, but focused on the political and military issues. The Arch of Constantine in Rome and the imperial coinage of the period also offer some valuable contemporary data. The later Church historians, such as Orosius, Socrates, Sozomenus, and Galesius, largely followed but sometimes expanded upon the Eusebian account of the emperor's conversion. The later pagan historians, such as Victor, Eutropius, and Zosimus, concentrated on the political and military aspects of the era, and contained a few useful details. Among earlier modern studies on Constantine, those still containing useful analyses of the years 312–13 are Alföldi, *Conversion of Constantine,* pp. 16–24; Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 70–90; MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 71–97; and Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 27–49. More recent and accurate treatments are found in Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 41–53; and Pohlsander, *The Emperor Constantine,* pp. 21–28. Unfortunately, Michael Grant's *Constantine the Great* separates the military and religious elements of this period, and thus fails to catch the spirit of the times; while T.G.Elliott's *Christianity of Constantine* starts from the untenable premise that Constantine was raised as a Christian, and thus has to deny the reality of the conversion of 312—for my review of the former, see *CHR,* vol. 81, 4 (1995), pp. 631–32, and of the latter, *CH,* vol. 67, 3 (1998), pp. 564–65.

2 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 42–43; Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 26; Eutrop., *Brev* X. 4. 3; and Zos., *Hist Nova II.* 14. 1.

3 Eusebius in *Hist Eccl* VIII 14. 1–6, and *Vita Const* I. 33–35, provided the most detailed accounts of the tyrannous rule of Maxentius, but echoes of these stories also appeared in Vict., *Caes* 40. 16–25; Eutrop., *Brev* X. 4; and *Liber Pont* 31. *Paneg* IX (XII). 3. 3 gave the probably accurate figure of 100,000 troops in the Maxentian army, while Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 15 greatly inflated this number. *Paneg* IX (XII) and X (IV) provided the clearest descriptions of the Maxentian strategy of guarding the Alpine passes and Po River valley with detachments of troops in northern Italy, and of defending Rome with a central reserve behind the Aurelian Wall. Lact., *De Mort Pers* 44; Euseb., *Hist Eccl* IX. 9, and *Vita Const.* I. 37–38; *Origo* 4. 12; Vict., *Caes* 40. 20–24; Eutrop., *Brev* X. 4; and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 15–16 reflected this strategy as well. For modern assessments of the political status and military forces of Maxentius in 312, consult: Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 69–72; MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 70–78; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 37–43; Grant, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 31–39; and, for the Horse Guards in particular, Michael Speidel, *Riding for Caesar: The Roman Emperors' Horse Guards* (Cambridge, MA, 1994), pp. 152–55.

4 Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 25 provided an excellent summary of Constantine's early rule in the Gallic northwest, mentioning his campaigns against barbarians, his tours of his provinces, and his mild rule of his subjects. Eutrop., *Brev* X. 3; and Vict., *Caes* 40 gave a similar picture, while *Paneg* VI (VII), VII (VI), and VIII (V) offered many details of his governance and campaigns. *Paneg* IX (XII). 5. 1–3 reported that Constantine led less than 40,000 troops to Italy, while Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 15 again inflated the number. *Paneg* IX (XII) and X (IV) gave the most extended accounts of the military campaign in Italy; with Lact., *De Mort Pers* 44; Euseb., *Hist Eccl* IX. 9, and *Vita Const* I. 26–38; *Origo* 4. 12; Vict., *Caes* 40. 20–24, and *Epitome* 40. 7; Eutrop., *Brev* X. 4; Oros., *Hist* VII. 28. 16; and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 15–16 offering a few details. For modern views of the political status and military forces of Constantine in 312, consult again: Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 69–72; MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 70–78; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 41–43; Grant, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 31–39; and for the Constantinian creation of a mobile *comitatenses,* see: Van Berchem, *L'armée de Dioclétien et la réforme constantinienne,* pp. 75–113; and Southern and Dixon, *Late Roman Army,* pp. 17–20.

5 For the religious imagery on the coins of the western combatants, see: Sutherland, *RIC,* vol. VI, esp. pp. 331–38 (Londinium), 219–28 (Treveri), 324–26 (Aquileia), and 372–85 (Roma). *Paneg* IX (XII). 4. 4 compared the personal characteristics and religious practices of Constantine and Maxentius in this way: "Te, Constantine, paterna pietas sequebatur, illum, ut falso generi non invideamus, impietas; te clementia, illum, crudelitas; te pudicitia soli dicata coniugio, illum libido stupris omnibus contaminata; te divina praecepta, illum superstitiosa maleficia…." Cf. Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 22–40 for a similar Christian view. For the syncretistic and superstitious elements in the religious climate of the time, see: Ramsay MacMullen, "Constantine and the Miraculous," *GRBS,* vol. 9 (1968), pp. 81–96, and *Constantine,* pp. 68–78.

6 *Paneg* IX (XII). 5–6; and *Paneg* X (IV). 21–24 provided the only detailed ancient written accounts of the campaign and battles in northwestern Italy. However, the first of the six specially cut relief panels on the the Arch of Constantine in Rome (the one on the western end) depicted the Constantinian army marching out of the Alps and into Italy at the beginning of the war.

7 *Paneg* IX (XII). 7: The people of Milan could not have been happy with the loss of status they had suffered and the brutal tyranny they had endured while Maxentius ruled from Rome. They undoubtedly welcomed Constantine as a "good emperor" from the north who would restore the prominence Milan had enjoyed under the Tetrarchy.

8 *Paneg* IX (XII). 8–13; and *Paneg* X (IV). 25–27 again provided the only detailed ancient written accounts of the northeastern battles; *Origo* 4. 12, and Vict., *Caes* 40. 20, however, briefly mentioned the key victory at Verona; while the other literary sources, Lact., *De Mort Pers* 44; Euseb., *Hist Eccl* IX. 9 and *Vita Const* I. 37; Eutrop., *Brev* X. 4; Oros., *Hist* VII. 28. 16; and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 15 just wrote of "many battles" in the north before turning to the conflict at Rome. However, the left panel on the south face of the Arch of Constantine depicted the difficult siege of Verona (incorrectly identified as Susa by Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors,* p. 303, note 34; but correctly identified as Verona by MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity,* p. 37). See T.W.Potter, *Roman Italy* (Berkeley, 1990) for an excellent survey of Roman Italy, and esp. Chs. 9 and 10 for Italy in the era of Constantine. Consult Galletier, *Panégyriques latins,* vol. II, pp. 105ff., and Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors,* pp. 288ff., for commentaries on *Paneg* IX (XII) and X (IV), the most detailed sources for the Italian campaign. See Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 70–71; MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 71–72; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 41–42; and Grant, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 33–37 for modern accounts of the Constantinian conquest of north Italy.

9 *Paneg* IX (XII). 15. 3 and 16. 1 recorded both the route which Constantine took, and the fear which he harbored: "At enim tu…qua brevissimum per Venetos iter est, rapto agmine

advolasti, celeritatem illam in re gerenda Scipionis et Caesaris tunc maxime cupienti Romae repraesentans"; and "Itaque unum iam illud timebatur, ne ille conterritus, his viribus graviter adflictus et in artum redactus, boni consuleret et debitas rei publicae poenas obsidione differet." Lact., *De Mort Pers* 44. 3 emphasized the difficulties Constantine had faced in the north, and indicated that the emperor "was prepared for either outcome" at Rome. Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 27 recounted that Constantine confessed that he feared he needed "some more powerful aid than his military forces could afford him because of the wicked and magical arts which were so diligently practiced by the tyrant." And Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 15 emphasized the greater number of troops Maxentius had at Rome. Potter, in *Roman Italy,* pp. 14–27, describes the geography and regions of ancient Italy, and on pp. 15 and 129, provides maps of Roman Italy and its road network. MacMullen, in "Constantine and the Miraculous," pp. 81–96, and also in *Constantine,* pp. 74–78, treats the religious climate.

10 So Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 27 described the psychological state of Constantine on the road to Rome in 312. The reliability of this account should be accepted because: (1) it fits the religious environment of the times and the situation of Constantine in Italy; (2) Eusebius claimed that the emperor himself later told him the story of his conversion experience personally; and (3) it agrees with material Constantine published in an "Edict on the Error of Polytheism" (reproduced in *Vita Const* II. 48–60) a dozen years before the *Vita.*

11 Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 28:
"αὐτοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἰδεῖν ἔφη ἐν αὐτῷ οὐρανῷ ὑπερκεί-
μενον τοῦ ἡλίου σταυροῦ τρόπαιον ἐκ φωτὸς συνιστάμενον, γραφήν τε αὐτῷ συνῆφθαι λέγουσαν, τούτῳ νίκα." A bronze coin type minted by the children of Constantine at Siscia and Sirmium in 350–51 depicted the vision of their father and carried the original Latin phrase from his vision which he had told them: HOC SIGNO VICTOR ERIS ("By Means Of This Sign You Will Be The Victor"). Eusebius paraphrased the Latin given to him by the emperor as TOUTO NIKA ("Conquer By This") in his Greek *Vita Constantini.* By the time this work was translated into Latin at the end of the fourth century, the original Latin phrasing of the emperor and the coin inscription of his heirs had been forgotten, and translators thus gave variants of the Eusebian phrasing like "In Hoc Vince," or "In Hoc Signo Vinces," which sometimes appear in the works of historians and artists not familiar with the numismatic evidence and the later Constantinian period. The famous numismatist Andreas Alföldi long ago recognized this, and reported it in "Hoc Signo Victor Eris: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Bekehrung Konstantins des Grossen," *Pisciculi* (Munich, 1939), p. 7, and in his later *Conversion of Constantine,* pp. 16–18; as have I in "Constantine's Conversion to Christianity," and "Christian Symbols in Military Motifs on Constantine's Coinage, p. 71.

12 Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 29: "While he was sleeping, the Christ of God appeared to him with the sign seen in the heavens ("σὺν τῷ φανέντι κατ' οὐρανὸν σημείῳ"), and ordered that a copy be made of the heavenly sign and that it be used as a safeguard (ἀλέξημα) in the battles with his enemies." Lact., *De Mort Pers* 44= Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* p. 91, also recorded the dream and command to use a *signum:* "Commonitus est in quiete Constantinus, ut caeleste signum Dei notaret in scutis atque ita proelium committeret."

13 Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 32 contained the account of the emperor consulting priests and receiving teaching on the mysteries of the Christian faith and its symbols.

14 Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 30–31 emphasized the making of the Labarum, which combined "the figure of the cross" and "the symbol of the Savior's name," and indicated that Constantine placed the Christian war standard at the front of his armies and wore the Christ monogram on his helmet thereafter. In *Vita Const* IV. 21 he reported that the emperor ordered his soldiers to inscribe their shields with "the symbol of the salutary trophy," and that he replaced the pagan insignia of the armies with Christian signs. Lact., *De Mort Pers* 44

emphasized the marking of shields with the Christogram, describing it as “the letter Chi traversed, with the highest top bent round, he marked Christ on the shields” (“transversa X littera, summo capite circumflexo, Christum in scutis notat”). Some scholars, such as Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* p. 33, MacMullen, *Constantine,* p. 72, and Creed, *Lactantius,* p. 119, have read Lactantius as describing a Crossogram (⳨); while others, like Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 84–86, Alföldi, *Conversion of Constantine,* pp. 16–18, and Pohlsander, *The Emperor Constantine,* p. 22, have read him as describing a Christogram (☧) Eusebius’ account of the monogram was more precise, describing it as “the symbol of the Savior’s name, two letters indicating the name of Christ made through the inscribing of the initial characters, the letter Rho being intersected [by Chi] in its center.” The Eusebian description, plus the gloss “Christum…notat” which Lactantius added to his wording, favors the Chi-Rho monogram. This was the standard form of the Christ monogram which appeared on Constantinian coinage until the last year of the emperor’s reign when the variant form of the Crossogram first appeared—for this debate and the numismatic evidence, see Charles Odahl, “The Celestial Sign on Constantine’s Shields at the Battle of the Mulvian Bridge,” *JRMMRA,* vol. 2 (1981), pp. 15–28.

15 Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 27–37 offered the full story of the conversion as it was given to him by the emperor; however, already in 313 he had heard and written about the emperor’s prayer, divine aid in battle, and an imperial statue in Rome holding a Christian standard in *Hist Eccl* IX. 9. References to divine inspiration in *Paneg* IX (XII), and on the Arch of Constantine; and the story of the dream and monogrammed shields in Lact., *De Mort Pers* 44, and the appearance of a cross scepter and Christogram on the Decennalia medallions of the emperor (all between 313–315) add weight to the *Vita* version of the conversion story. And, of course, the later Church historians, such as Ruf., *Hist Eccl* IX. 9, Phil., *Hist Eccl* I. 6, Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 2, Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 3–4, and Gales., *Hist Eccl* I. 3–7, followed Eusebius and waxed eloquent on the vision of the emperor and the making of the Labarum. Late nineteenth-century Realpolitik, early twentieth-century scientific rationalism, and the long debate on the authenticity of Eusebius, however, led many scholars from the 1930s to the 1970s to prefer the earlier and shorter Lactantian version to the later and longer Eusebian account of the conversion of Constantine. With the extensive work on Constantinian documents, coinage, and art, which has corroborated much of the information given in the *Vita Constantini,* with the intensive analyses of fourth-century religious and magical practices, and with a renewed interest in the majesty and mystery of nature over the past few decades, the Eusebian vision element has finally regained the central place it has always deserved in the conversion story. A.H.M. Jones led the way in his *Constantine* (1962), pp. 84–90, by positing a “halo phenomenon”—the rays of the sun cutting the shape of a cross through a veil of ice crystals—as a meteorological explanation for the emperor’s vision. R.MacMullen followed with investigations into fourth-century religious beliefs and superstitious practices in his article “Constantine and the Miraculous” (1968), and many subsequent books on religion in the Roman Empire. I offered a careful analysis of the different themes of the *De Mortibus Persecutorum* and the *Vita Constantini* in “Constantine’s Conversion to Christianity” (1979), pp. 11–15, showing how the Lactantian conversion story was merely a small digression from the main theme of a work dealing with the *ultio* of God against persecutors while the Eusebian conversion narrative was the all-important initial event in a work focused on the religious life of the Christian emperor, and thus offered the full details within the religious climate of the time. T.D.Barnes came to a similar conclusion in *Constantine and Eusebius* (1981), p. 43, wherein he stated that the Lactantian account was “probably no more than an attempt to give Constantine’s unexpected action a conventional religious explanation,” and went on to accept the reality of the visionary experience; and he explained his preference for the Eusebian over the Lactantian account in detail in “The Conversion of Constantine,” *EMC,* vol. 29, n.s., 4 (1985), pp. 371–

91. And Peter Weiss in “Die Vision Constantins,” *FAS,* Heft 13 (Kallmünz, 1993), pp. 143–69, has discussed the “halo phenomenon” theory at length. I have twice witnessed halo phenomena—once in western Europe, and once in the Idaho mountains—and can attest to their dramatic quality, and how they would have affected a fourth-century man looking to the heavens for divine *signa*. And for the HOC SIGNO vision and SALUS REIPUBLICAE monogrammed shield coins, consult: J.P.C. Kent, *RIC,* vol. VIII, pp. 12–13, 345, 368–69, and 386–89; Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 185 and 197; and Odahl, “Christian Symbols in Military Motifs,” p. 71.

16 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 44. 3=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 90–91: “Constantinus …copias omnes ad urbem propius admovit et e regione pontis Mulvii consedit.” Cf. *Paneg* IX (XII). 16–17; *Paneg* X (IV). 28–29; Euseb., *Hist Eccl.* IX. 9, and *Vita Const* I. 38; *Origo* 4. 12; Eutrop., *Brev* X. 4; Vict., *Epitome* 40. 6–7; Oros., *Hist* VII. 28. 16; and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 16. 1: “Constantine advanced to Rome with his army and camped before the city in a broad field suitable for a cavalry engagement.” The above listed sources make it clear that the final battle between Constantine and Maxentius took place in the plain above the Tiber River where the Flaminian Way runs across the Mulvian Bridge. Only Aurelius Victor in *Caes* 40. 21–23 stated that the battle started nine miles away at “Saxa Rubra”—a mistake which most scholars have now recognized he transposed from a battle of AD 193 (e.g., Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 42–43, note 144; and Nixon and Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors,* pp. 319–20, note 103); and only he misspelled the bridge over the Tiber as the *Pons Milvius*—from Cicero, *Orat in Catilinam* III. 2 *(LCL)* in the first century BC to Orosius, *Hist* VII. 28 in the fifth century AD, the classical spelling of the bridge was *Pons Mulvius*. The currency of epitomized histories, and the errors of copyists in the medieval period led to divergent spellings, such as *Ponte Molle* and *Ponte Milvio,* and the latter stuck. However, the classical spelling of Cicero should be preferred to the late mistake of Victor and its modern derivative (as by Alföldi, *Conversion of Constantine,* pp. 14 and 18; Odahl, “Constantine’s Conversion to Christianity,” pp. 10ff.; and Pohlsander, *Helena: Empress and Saint,* p. 228).

17 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 44=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 91–92, recorded the chanting of the Roman people in the Circus for Constantine, the reading of the Sibylline Books and misinterpretation of the prophecy by Maxentius (cf. Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 16. 1), and the cutting of the bridge over the river; but his imperial dating and battle sequencing were faulty. *Paneg* IX (XII). 16. 2 stated that the “divina mens…nefario homini eripuere consilium, ut…subito prorumperet et…sexennio ipsum diem natalis sui ultima sua caede signaret”; while Euseb., in *Vita Const* I. 38 (cf. *Hist Eccl* IX. 9) wrote that “θεὸς αὐτὸς οἷα δεσμοῖς τισι τὸν τύραννον πορρωτάτω πυλῶν ἐξέλκει.” *CIL,* vol. I^2, p. 174 confirmed *Paneg* IX (XII) on the date of 28 October 312.

18 *Paneg* IX (XII). 16–18; *Paneg* X (IV). 28–30; Lact., *De Mort Pers* 44; Euseb., *Hist Eccl* IX. 9, and *Vita Const* I. 38; *Origo* 4. 12; Vict., *Caes* 40. 23; Vict., *Epitome* 40. 7; and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 15–17 were the more valuable ancient written sources for the Battle of the Mulvian Bridge; while the right panel on the south face of the Arch of Constantine depicted the Constantinian troops driving the Maxentian army into the Tiber River. For similar reconstructions in modern scholarship, consult: MacMullen, *Constantine,* p. 78; and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 43; and especially M.P.Speidel, “Maxentius and his *Equites Singulares* in the Battle of the Milvian Bridge,” *Classical Antiquity,* vol. 5, 2 (1986), pp. 253–59, and *Riding for Caesar,* pp. 152–55.

19 *Paneg* IX (XII). 18–19: “universus in gaudia et vindictam populus Romanus exarsit”; *Paneg* X (IV). 30–34; Lact., *De Mort Pers* 44. 10=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* p. 92: “cum magna senatus populique Romani laetitia”; Euseb., *Hist Eccl* IX. 9. 9, and *Vita Const* I. 39; and the relief panel on the eastern end of the Arch of Constantine recorded the *adventus* of 29 October 312. Lact., *De Mort Pers* 44. 11=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* p. 92: “Senatus

Constantino virtutis gratia primi nominis titulum decrevit"; *Paneg* IX (XII). 20–21; *Paneg* X (IV). 35; Vict., *Caes* 40. 25–33; and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 17 were the key ancient literary sources for the *adventus* events; while the panels on the north face of the Arch of Constantine depicted the public speech and largess scenes, and the arch inscription displayed the title MAXIMUS… AUGUSTUS—*CIL,* vol. VI, 1139; Sutherland, *RIC,* vol. VI, p. 390, and Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 36–42, and 152–53 list the S P Q R OPTIMO PRINCIPI coins of 312. Speidel, *Riding for Caesar,* pp. 155–57, deals with the fate of the Praetorians and Imperial Horse Guards; Grünewald, *Constantinus Maximus Augustus,* pp. 63– 92, analyzes the arch inscription; and Alföldi, *Conversion of Constantine,* pp. 53–81, and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 44–46 cover the relations of Constantine and the Senate.

20 *Paneg* IX (XII). 19 described the triumphal entry, but at 19. 3 commented: "Ausi etiam quidam ut resisteres poscere et queri tam cito accessisse palatium et, cum ingressus esses, non solum oculis sequi sed paene etiam sacrum limen inrumpere." Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 39 also recorded the entry procession, but added the material on the "εὐχαριστήριον . . . τῷ τῆς νίκης αἰτίῳ." None of the other contemporary written sources, nor the reliefs on the Arch of Constantine, indicated any sacrifices by the emperor on the Capitoline. Alföldi, *Conversion of Constantine,* p. 24, is sure that the Christogram would have been "conspicuous on the shields of the men…at the entry into Rome." Johannes Straub, in his article "Konstantins Verzicht auf den Gang zum Kapitol," *Historia,* vol. 4 (1955), pp. 297–313, argued that the evidence of the Trier panegyric of 313 proves that the newly converted emperor "denied to the god of the Roman state the traditional sacrifice" on the Capitol at the conclusion of his triumphal parade into Rome in 312. MacMullen, *Constantine,* p. 81, Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 40–42, Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 44, and MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity,* p. 34, also accept this reading of the evidence.

21 Eusebius first described the statue and inscription in the *Basilica Nova* in his *Hist Eccl* IX. 9. 10–11 (*ca.* 313), and later in the *Vita Const* I. 40 (*ca.* 337), and wrote that Constantine thought that "the saving sign was the safeguard of the Roman government and of the whole empire" ("σωτήριον . . . σημεῖον . . . φυλακτήριον"); Vict., *Caes* 40. 26 mentioned the rededication of the basilica by the Senate to the meritorious services of Constantine. For attempts to envisage the *Basilica Nova* and colossal statue in their original form, consult: Anthony Minoprio, "A Restoration of the Basilica of Constantine, Rome," *Papers of the British School at Rome,* vol. 12 (1932), pp. 1–25; L'Orange, *Art Forms and Civic Life in the Late Roman Empire,* pp. 121–25; and Wheeler, *Roman Art and Architecture,* pp. 114–15; cf. Alföldi, *Conversion of Constantine,* p. 42; and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 46.

22 Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 32 and 42.

23 The most detailed study on Ossius and his relationship to Constantine is by Victor C.De Clercq, *Ossius of Cordova* (Washington, 1954). Calcidius, the translator of the *Timaeus,* praised the intelligence and learning of the bishop in his dedication; while De Clercq, *Ossius,* pp. 59–79, quotes that dedication and discusses the education of Ossius. Constantine later compared the Platonic concept of the first and second Deity to the Christian God the Father and His Son the Word in his *Orat ad Coet* 9. Ossius was mentioned by name in an imperial epistle of Constantine offering monetary subsidies to the Church—in Euseb., *Hist Eccl* X. 6; in a law on the manumission of slaves in churches—in *Codex Theod* IV. 7. 1; and by the later ecclesiastical historians for his role in the Arian Conflict—e.g., Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 7, and Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 16. Many modern scholars who have judged Ossius to have been an advisor to Constantine on Christianity, as per example: L.Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'église,* 4th. ed., vol. II (Paris, 1907)=*Early History of the Christian Church,* vol. II (London, 1912), pp. 48–50, and 109–22; De Clercq, *Ossius,* pp. 148ff.; Alföldi, *Conversion*

of Constantine, p. 14; Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 74–75, 87, 91, and 123–36; MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 102–7, 131, and 168–79; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 43, 51–56, 74, 212–17, and 225–26; Frend, *The Donatist Church,* pp. 145–46; and Odahl, "God and Constantine," pp. 352–55. The Roman pontificate of Miltiades was recorded in the ancient *Liber Pont* 33; while Euseb., *Hist Eccl* X. 5. 18–20 preserved the "Epistle of Constantine to Miltiades" requesting him to adjudicate the African schism; Euseb., *Hist Eccl* X. 5. 21–24, and Optatus, *De Schis Donat, App* 3 also recorded imperial letters which mentioned the Roman Synod while calling the Council of Arles. The pontificate of Miltiades is surveyed in modern works by James T.Shotwell and Louise R.Loomis, *The See of Peter* (New York, 1927), pp. 448–62; Geoffrey Barraclough, *The Medieval Papacy* (New York, 1968), pp. 19–21; Nicholas Cheetham, *Keepers of the Keys* (New York, 1983), p. 17; and Richard P.McBrien, *Lives of the Popes* (San Francisco, 1997), pp. 56–7. The thesis of B.H.Warmington that Constantine did not use Christian clergy as advisors in "Did Constantine have 'Religious Advisers'?," *Studia Patristica,* vol. 19 (1989), pp. 117–29, is untenable.

24 Euseb., *Hist Eccl* X. 5. 15–17, preserved a Greek copy of "The First Epistle of Constantine to Anullinus," the Proconsul of Africa, containing the restoration order.

25 Euseb., *Hist Eccl* X. 6, preserved a Greek translation of the "Epistle of Constantine Augustus to Caecilianus, Bishop of Carthage," on the monetary grants to clergy.

26 Euseb., *Hist Eccl* X. 7, preserved a Greek copy of "The Second Epistle of Constantine to Anullinus," granting exemption from "munera civilia" to Catholic clergy, while *Codex Theod* XVI. 2.2=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 105–6, preserved a Latin text of this order sent to Octavianus, the Corrector of Lucania and Bruttium in south Italy (dating to February and October of 313).

27 Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 42 reported the "benefactions to the churches"; Vict., *Caes* 40. 25, and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 17 recorded the abolishing of the Praetorians and Horse Guards, and the demolishing of their forts; while *Liber Pont* 34=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 139–44 described the *Basilica Constantiniana.* For modern work on these topics, see: Speidel, "Maxentius and his *Equites Singulares"* pp. 253–57, and *Riding for Caesar,* pp. 155–57; Richard Krautheimer and Spencer Corbett, "The Constantinian Basilica of the Lateran," *Antiquity,* vol. 34 (1960), pp. 201–6; Suzanne S.Alexander, "Studies in Constantinian Church Architecture," *RAC,* vol. 47, 1–2 (1971), pp. 284–90; Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City,* pp. 21–24; and Odahl, "Christian Basilicas of Constantinian Rome," pp. 3–12.

28 For modern analyses of the initial legislative favors of Constantine for the Church in 312–13, consult: J.Gaudemet, "La legislation religieuse de Constantin," *RHEF,* vol. 33 (1947), pp. 26–32, where he posits that "Toutes les constitutions relatives a l'Eglise catholique lui font une place privilégiée dans la société romaine"; Palanque, *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire,* pp. 5–7, where he states that "restitutions, exemptions and subventions constituted exceptional favours for the Christian Church in the West, and went far beyond the attitude of tolerant indifference which the emperors had shown in the course of previous years"; Clémence Dupont, "Les privileges des clercs sous Constantin," *RHE,* vol. 62 (1967), pp. 729–35; Alföldi, *Conversion of Constantine,* pp. 46–52; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 49–50, where he claims that Constantine "changed the legal status of the Church and its place in Roman society," and lifted "Christianity to a privileged position among the religions of the Roman Empire"; and Corcoran, *Empire of the Tetrarchs,* pp. 153–55, and 162.

29 The alliance of Constantine and Licinius through the betrothal and marriage of Constantia to the latter was mentioned in Lact., *De Mort Pers* 43. 2 and 45. 1; Euseb., *Hist Eccl* X. 8. 3 and *Vita Const* I. 50; *Origo* 5. 13; Vict., *Caes* 41. 2 and *Epitome* 41. 4; Eutrop., *Brev* X. 5; and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 17. 2; while the letter of Constantine to Maximin was mentioned in Lact., *De Mort Pers* 37. 1 and 44. 11–12; and Euseb., *Hist Eccl* IX. 9. 12. On these topics,

see: Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 41, 48–9, and 62; and N.H.Baynes, "Two Notes on the Great Persecution," CQ, vol. 18 (1924), pp. 193–4.

30 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 45. 1: "Constantinus rebus in urbe compositis hieme proxima Mediolanum concessit. Eodem Licinius advenit, ut acciperet uxorem." The itineraries of the emperors at this time are chronicled in Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 70–71, and 81; and the gold adventus medallion and other coinage issued in northern Italy at the time of the Milan meeting are listed in Sutherland, *RIC,* vol. VI, pp. 296–98.

31 *Origo* 5. 13: "Constantinus hoc Licinium foedere sibi fecit adiungi: ut Licinius Constantiam, sororem Constantini, apud Mediolanum duxisset uxorem. Nuptiis celebratis, Gallias repetit Constantinus, Licinio ad Illyricum reverso." Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 36–37, and *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 251–52, deals with the marriage of Constantius and Theodora, and the children of that union; while Hans A.Pohlsander, "Constantia," *Ancient Society,* vol. 24 (1993), pp. 151–67, reviews the known facts concerning Constantia in particular. Since many members of the Constantinian family appear to have converted to Christianity not long after the conversion of the emperor, it is reasonable to assume that he began to influence their religious beliefs at this time. In the war which Licinius fought with Maximin immediately after the Milan Conference, he had his troops offer a prayer to the *Summus Deus* before a key battle recorded in Lact., *De Mort Pers* 46. Both Piganiol, *L'empereur Constantin,* pp. 75–78, and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 63, posit that this prayer was suggested by Constantine to Licinius at Milan.

32 For the development of a central mobile field force by Constantine, consult: Berchem, *L'armée de Dioclétien et la réforme constantinienne,* pp. 75–118; Luttwak, *Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire,* pp. 178–88; and Ferrill, *Roman Imperial Grand Strategy,* pp. 47–51; and for the alterations in the Diocletianic coinage system which Constantine had made between 307 and 313—lowering the size and weight of the folles, minting them at 96 to the pound, and replacing the gold aureus with a new gold coin, the solidus, minted at 72 to the pound—see: Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 150–57, and 239–40 (topics covered in more detail in a later chapter).

33 The "Edict of Milan" has survived only in the form of two letters addressed by Licinius (but in the names of Constantine and himself) to provincial governors of the east after he had defeated Maximin in June of 313—one in the original Latin to the governor of Bithynia at Nicomedia preserved by Lactantius in *De Mort Pers* 48=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 103–5; and one in a Greek translation to the governor of Palestine at Caesarea recorded by Eusebius in *Hist Eccl* X. 5. 2–14. Otto Seeck in "Das sogenannte Edikt von Mailand," *ZK,* vol. 12 (1891), pp. 381–86, challenged the label "Edict of Milan" for this document on the grounds that it was written in the form of an *epistula* (not an *edictum),* was issued only in the east (not at Milan), and that it only affected Christians of the eastern provinces. M.V.Anastos in "The Edict of Milan (313): A Defense of Its Traditional Authorship and Designation," *REB,* vol. 25 (1967), pp. 13–41, rejected Seeck's "paradoxographical" arguments, and defended the traditional label and empire-wide effects of the edict. The truth is probably somewhere in the middle of their extreme positions. Millar, in his *Emperor in the Roman World,* pp. 577–84, points out that imperial *epistulae* in the fourth century came to have the same force as *edicta* did in earlier imperial eras. The extant copies of the document clearly state that it was drawn up in Milan *(Mediolanum)* by both Constantine and Licinius. And even if Constantine did not need to issue it in the west, it was the governing policy on religion for the whole empire. Thus, using the label "Edict of Milan" in quotation marks probably does no great harm, although some constitutional purists might prefer a less precise label with terms such as "accord" or "agreement." The significance of the Milan agreement for the ancient Church is, of course, more important than the label employed for it by modern scholars. As Walter Ullmann pointed out in "The Constitutional Significance of Constantine the Great's Settlement," *JEH,* vol. 27, 1 (1976), pp. 1–16, the Milan agreement offered an "acknowledgement of the Church as a *corpus* in a juristic sense," and allowed the

Ecclesia to be "incorporated into the legal order of Rome." Barnes, through his article on "Lactantius and Constantine," and in the early part of his book *Constantine and Eusebius,* emphasizes that the agreement at Milan was just the final stage in the liberation of Christians from the "Great Persecution" which had begun with the actions of Constantine in 306 and ended with the letters of Licinius in 313.

34 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 36–41, and Euseb., *Hist Eccl* IX. 1–8, provided the ancient narratives; while Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution,* pp. 385–91; Castritius, *Studien zu Maximinus Daia,* pp. 48–83; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 40–41; and Nicholson, "The 'Pagan Churches' of Maximinus Daia and Julian the Apostate," pp. 1–10, offer modern commentary.

35 Among the ancient sources, Lact., *De Mort Pers* 44–52=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 96–98, and Euseb., *Hist Eccl* IX. 10–11, offered the most details; while Vict., *Caes* 41. 1, Eutrop., *Brev* X. 4. 4, Oros., *Hist* VII. 28. 17, and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 17. 3, gave brief accounts of the victory of Licinius over Maximin. For modern reconstructions, see: MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 92–95; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 62–65; and Grant, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 39–41. The joyful chant of Lactantius at the end of the "Great Persecution" was written in *De Mort Pers* 1. 2–3=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* p. 72—for the evidence on his return to Trier in 313, see the next chapter.

Notes to Chapter VI

1 The most useful ancient sources for the activities of Constantine between his conversion in 312 and return to Rome in 315 were the *Vita Constantini* of Eusebius, which provided a short summary of the period; the *Divinae Institutiones, De Ira Dei,* and *De Mortibus Persecutorum* which were written by Lactantius, and probably shared with Constantine to further his Christian education during these years; the *Vita Constantini* and *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Eusebius and the *De Schismate Donatistarum* and the *Appendix* of Optatus, which dealt with the involvement and preserved some documents of Constantine in the Donatist dispute; the *Liber Pontificalis,* which recounted his church-building program in Rome; the coinage of the period, which recorded the first use of Christian symbols in imperial art; and *Panegyricus* IX (XII), and the sculpture and inscription on the senatorial Arch of Constantine in Rome, which revealed pagan reactions to the first Christian emperor. Some modern Constantinian studies containing useful treatments of this period are Alföldi, *Conversion of Constantine,* pp. 36–81; Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 91–107; MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 101–20; Diana Bowder, *The Age of Constantine and Julian* (New York, 1978), pp. 28–70; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 44–61; Grünewald, *Constantinus Maximus Augustus,* pp. 63–108; Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 73–95; Pohlsander, *The Emperor Constantine,* pp. 29–37; and H.A.Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore, MD, 2000), pp. 204–31. Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 71–73, offers a chronology of the residences and journeys of Constantine in this period.

2 *Paneg* IX (XII). 21–22, and *Paneg* X (IV). 18 specifically recorded, while Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 46 broadly hinted at, this victory over barbarians on the Rhine in the summer of 313. Although Barnes in "The Victories of Constantine," p. 151 and *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 66, thought that this victory should be dated to 314, Odahl in "A Pagan's Reaction to Constantine's Conversion," p. 45, and Rodgers in *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors,* pp. 328–29, note 145, correctly date it to 313.

3 *Paneg* IX (XII). 1 and 23 mentioned the occasion and some of the events of this *adventus.* MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 11–16, and MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity,* pp. 17–89, describe adventus ceremonies.

4 The military sections of the Trier panegyric were listed in the previous chapter. Some of the important religious sections quoted in this chapter are found in: *Paneg* IX (XII). 2. 4–5: “*Quisnam* te *Deus,* quae tam *Praesens* hortata est *Maiestas,* ut…ipse per temet liberandae urbis tempus venisse sentires? Habes profecto aliquod cum *illa Mente Divina,* Constantine, secretum, quae delegata nostri diis minoribus cura uni se tibi dignatur ostendere.” 4. 1: “Quid in consilio nisi *divinum numen* habuisti?” 11. 4: “Tu *divino monitus instinctu*” 26. 1–3: “Quamobrem te, *Summe rerum Sator,* cuius tot nomina sunt quot gentium linguas esse voluisti (quem enim te ipse dici velis, scire non possumus), sive tute *Quaedam Vis Mensque Divina* es, quae toto infusa mundo,…sive *Aliqua supra omne caelum Potestas* es quae hoc opus tuum ex altiore naturae arce despicias: te, inquam oramus et quaesumus ut hunc in omnia saecula principem serves.”

5 Pichon, in *Les derniers écrivains profanes,* p. 86, writes of the Gallic panegyrists in general: “il est bien certain, en effet, que les orateurs qui parlaient devant les Empereurs avaient soin de ne rien dire qui ne fût conforme aux pensées, aux désirs des souverains. Par là, leurs discours peuvent nous renseigner utilement sur les intentions et les ambitions des princes auxquels ils sont consacrés;…fidèles reflets de la politique impériale”; and p. 105, writes of the religious references in the Trier panegyric of 313 in particular: “c’est une sorte de polythéisme hiérarchisé, avec des aspirations monothéistes, plus philosophique que religieux, plus éclectique que précis, qui place l’auteur de ce Panégyrique à égale distance entre les vrais païens et les chrétiens.” Cf. Piganiol, *L’empereur Constantin,* pp. 68–70; Jones, *Constantine,* p. 82, who describes the peroration as “a masterpiece of ambiguity”; Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion,* pp. 252–91, who analyzes the religious language of this panegyrical oration within the syncretistic tendencies of the age, and p. 285, as quoted above, suggests that the Trier panegyrist was “striving for a religiously neutral description of the divine foundations of Constantine’s imperial position”; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 46–47; and Odahl, “A Pagan’s Reaction to Constantine’s Conversion,” pp. 45–63, who gives the most detailed account of the dilemma of the orator, and the most thorough analysis of the religious terminology of his oration.

6 Galerius, who controlled Nicomedia between 305 and 311, may have decided to hold Helena and Crispus in the east as sureties for the good behavior of Constantine in the west. The Gallic emperor’s limited recognition of the Herculian usurpers and his refusal to attack Galerian troops in Italy may have been a partial result of that policy. After the death of Galerius, Maximin controlled Nicomedia from 311 to 313, and undoubtedly continued the policy of his mentor. There are a couple of hints in the ancient sources which link Helena to Nicomedia, and indicate a close relationship between her and Crispus: (1) the fact that Lucian of Antioch was martyred in Nicomedia in early 312 and was later identified as the favorite saint of Helena may mean that Helena was still in Nicomedia then and witnessed his death—Phil., *Hist Eccl* II. 12–13; and (2) the fact that Helena exhibited extreme grief over the later execution of Crispus may mean that she had helped raise him and had developed a close bond with her first grandson—Vict., *Epitome* 41. 11–12, and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 29. 1–2.

7 On the relationship of Helena and Fausta, Pohlsander, *Helena,* p. 23, comments:

> There may well have been rivalries and jealousies between Helena and Fausta beyond those tensions that commonly exist between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. Fausta must have resented the domination of Constantine’s court by Helena. Helena may have been possessive of Constantine and may have resented Fausta as the half-sister of Theodora, who had replaced Helena as the consort of Constantius.

Theodora disappeared from the historical record about this time, and may have been sent to live with her mother in Rome or with one of her children elsewhere. Her two surviving sons, Flavius Dalmatius and Julius Constantius were sent away for education in southern Gaul, and remained honored exiles without political roles until after Helena's demise. Her oldest daughter Constantia had already been married to Licinius and sent to the east, and her two younger daughters, Anastasia and Eutropia, would soon be wed to Roman nobles. Thus, shortly after Helena's reunion with Constantine, his court was cleared of "the other woman" and her children. Julian the Apostate later referred to Helena as the "wicked stepmother" (πανοῦργος μητρυιά) of his father Julius Constantius, and seems to have preserved a family tradition among the children and grandchildren of Theodora that it was Helena who had kept them away from Constantine's court and public careers for many years—Libanius, *Oration* 14. 29–31 *(LCL)*. For the ancient evidence on Theodora and her children, consult: *PLRE,* vol. I—Theodora, p. 895; Dalmatius, pp. 240–41; Constantius, p. 226; Hannibalianus, p. 407; Constantia, p. 221; Anastasia, p. 58; Eutropia, p. 316; and Barnes, *New Empire,* p. 37, and *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 251. Fausta gave birth to her first son, Constantinus II, at Arles on 7 August 316—Vict., *Epitome* 41. 4; Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 20; and CIL, vol. I^2, p. 271. She would produce two more sons and two daughters for Constantine before her death in 326—Barnes, *New Empire,* p. 43. The Ada Cameo, showing Constantine's family in *ca.* 316–317, is displayed in the Stadtbibliothek of Trier, and is most accurately analyzed by: Anna Maria Cetto, "Der Trierer Caesaren-Cameo: Eine neue Deutung," *Der kleine Bund,* vol. 30, 39 (Bern, Sept. 30, 1949); J.M.C.Toynbee, "Der römische Kameo der Stadtbibliothek Trier," *TZ,* vol. 20 (1951), pp. 175–77; Wilhelm Bernhard Kaiser, "Der Trierer Ada-Kameo," *Festgabe Wolfgang Jungandreas* (Trier, 1964), pp. 24–35; and Pohlsander, "Crispus," pp. 93–95. Excavations under the nave of the cathedral at Trier after World War II uncovered a room with sumptuous decorations, and several painted female figures on the ceiling (in pieces but reconstructed), which seem to indicate that this was a part of the domestic quarters of the palace complex at Trier—for descriptions and interpretations, consult: Theodor Konrad Kempf, "Die Konstantinischen Deckenmalereien aus dem Trierer

Dom," *Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt,* vol. 7 (Mainz, 1977), pp. 147–59; Wightman, *Roman Trier,* pp. 109–10, and *Gallia Belgica,* p. 236; Winfried Weber, *Constantinische Deckengemälde aus dem römischen Palast unter dem Trierer Dom,* 2nd ed. (Trier, 1986); and Pohlsander, *Helena,* pp. 37–47. A floor mosaic dating from the mid-320s found in Aquileia may indicate that Fausta played a role in raising Crispus and developed a maternal bond for the young man. It showed Fausta surrounded by the four sons of Constantine—Crispus, Constantine II, Constantius II, and Constans. This mosaic is described and analyzed by Heinz Kähler, *Die Stiftermosaiken in der konstantinischen Südkirche von Aquileia* (Cologne, 1962); Jörgen Bracker, "Zur Ikonographie Constantins und seiner Söhne," *Kölner Jahrbuch,* vol. 8 (1965–66), pp. 12–23; and Pohlsander, "Crispus," pp. 90–91.

8 Jer., *Chron* ad a. Abr. 2333: "Crispum Lactantius Latinis litteris erudivit vir omnium suo tempore eloquentissimus"; *De Vir Ill* 80: "hic extrema senectute magister Caesaris Crispi filii Constantini in Gallia fuit." For Jerome, see: J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (New York, 1975). Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 13, places Lactantius in Trier as a tutor to Crispus between 309 and 313, and then back in Nicomedia after 313; and Digeser, "Lactantius and Constantine's Letter to Arles," p. 52, "Lactantius and the Edict of Milan: Does it Determine Venue?" *Studia Patristica,* vol. 31 (1997), p. 295, and *Making of a Christian Empire,* pp. 133–35, has Lactantius giving a course of lectures from the *Divine Institutes* to Constantine and his court at Trier between 310 and 313. However, neither of them deals with the issues of when and how Crispus got to Trier; and Digeser—though she is partially right on the later influence of Lactantius on Constantine—ignores the key issue of how and when Crispus got to Trier; and is wrong in her chronology, and fails to realize that Constantine was away from Trier during most of this period (fighting Franks on the Rhine, chasing Maximian to Massilia, and touring Britain in 310; visiting Autun in 311; and campaigning in Italy and on the Rhine in 312–13); and that he had neither the time nor the interest to receive detailed Christian instruction from Lactantius in those years. Jones, *Constantine,* p. 80; Alföldi, *Conversion of Constantine,* p. 46; Creed, *Lactantius,* pp. xxvii and xxxiv–xxxv; and Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 67–68, more accurately place Lactantius at Trier as the tutor of Crispus after the conversion of Constantine and his return to Gaul in 313. Hans A.Pohlsander, "Crispus: Brilliant Career and Tragic End," *Historia,* vol. 33, 1 (1984), pp. 82–83, seems to agree with this dating, and also suggests that "Constantine's mother Helena certainly must have seen to it that Crispus received a thoroughly Christian education"; while Palanque, in "Sur la date du *De Mortibus Persecutorum*" p. 716, posits as I have here that Crispus "était resté a Nicomédie jusqu'à l'été 313 et qu'il n'est venu en Gaule rejoindre son père qu'à cette date, accompagné de son nouveau précepteur."

9 Laws in the *Codex Theodosianus,* coin issues, and hints in the literary sources place Constantine in Trier during August and early autumn of 313; from November of 313 to June of 314; and from late October of 314 to the end of April 315—Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 71–72.

10 *Div Inst* VII. 26. Most scholars place the composition of the *Divine Institutes* between 305–11, as e.g., Stevenson, "Life and Literary Activity of Lactantius," pp. 670–73; Eberhard Heck, *Die dualistischen Zusätze und die Kaiseranreden bei Lactantius* (Heidelberg, 1972),

pp. 143ff; and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 291, note 96. Heck, however, argues that Lactantius added the Constantinian dedications and several dualistic passages only in 324 when he was revising the text. His arguments have some weaknesses. As Stevenson pointed out in "Life and Literary Activity of Lactantius," ibid., the earlier dedications to Constantine as a good emperor who was tolerating Christians in his domains found in Books I–IV and VI clearly date to his pre-Christian period, while the final one to him as the chosen instrument of God in Book VII must date to the year 313 following his conversion. Odahl, in "God and Constantine," pp. 337–38, and Digeser, in "Lactantius and Constantine's Letter to Arles," pp. 33–52, and *Making of a Christian Empire,* p. 134, argue that he added the final dedication in 313 when he was residing in Trier.

11 *Div Inst* VII. 26. 11–17: *"Sanctissime imperator…te Deus Summus ad restituendum iustitiae domicilium et ad tutelam generis humani excitavit…. Te providentia SummaeDivinitatis ad fastigium principale provexit….* Te dextera Dei potens…protegit…. *Nec immerito rerum Dominus ac Rector te potissimum delegit per quem sanctamreligionem suam restauraret…. Erat igitur congruens ut in formando generis humanistatu te auctore ac ministro Divinitas uteretur.* Cui nos cotidianis precibus supplicamus, ut te in primis, quem rerum custodem voluit esse, custodiat…." In *Div Inst*I. 1 and V. 24 Lactantius made it clear that imperial power was a gift fromGod, and that if it was abused, divine vengeance would follow. On the threats ofthe *ultio Dei* in the *Divine Institutes,* see: Baynes, "Lactantius, the *Divine Institutes*"in *Byzantine Studies,* pp. 348–54.

12 *Div Inst* I. 3. Martial descriptions for the *Deus Summus* were common in this militaristic age. The panegyrist at Trier in 313 called him the "potestas supra omne caelum…ex arce despiciens" (*Paneg* IX (XII). 26); and Constantine in a letter to the bishops at Arles in 314 characterized him as the "Deus omnipotens in caeli specula residens" ("Epistula Constantini ad Episcopos Catholicos" in Optatus, *App* 5). The "Highest Divinity" was thus seen as heavenly commander in a celestial citadel *(arx)* or watchtower *(specula),* looking down upon his earthly creation—for modern comments on this, see: Ramsay MacMullen, *Soldier and Civilian in the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 1967), p. 39; and Odahl, "A Pagan's Reaction to Constantine's Conversion," p. 54, and "God and Constantine," p. 345.

13 The indebtedness of Constantine to ideas and phrases in the *Institutiones* can be seen in his Donatist Epistles and in his *Oration to the Assembly of Saints,* and has been noted by several scholars, including: MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 125–31; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 73–76; Fox, *Pagans and Christians,* pp. 659–61, and 680–81; Odahl, "Constantine's Epistle to the Bishops at the Council of Arles," pp. 279–81, and "God and Constantine," pp. 336–41; and Digeser, *Making of a Christian Empire,* pp. 136–38.

14 *De Ira Dei* 2. Stevenson, "Life and Literary Activity of Lactantius," pp. 674–75; and Mary F.McDonald, *Lactantius: The Minor Works* (Washington, 1965), pp. 59–60, both date this work to 313–14.

15 *De Ira Dei* 5, 6, 8, and 10–20, as for example: "Deus…et iustos diligit, et impios odit (19)"; and "noxios punit, nec patitur longius procedere, cum eos inemendabiles esse perviderit (20)."

16 Palanque, "Sur la date du *De Mortibus Persecutorum*" pp. 711–16, dates the composition of this work to the years 313–15 when Lactantius was at court in Trier. Jones, *Constantine,* p. 80, Alföldi, *Conversion of Constantine,* pp. 44–46, and Creed, *Lactantius,* pp. xxxiii–xxxv, all largely agree. Barnes, "Lactantius and Constantine, pp. 29–46, and *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 13–14, also accepts this dating, but places the composition of the work in the east. Though I agree with much of Barnes' chronological work, I have to disagree with him on this point. The influence of Lactantius on Constantine seems too profound to have been merely literary, and the statements of Jerome on Lactantius' tutoring work in Gaul best fit this period. Some numismatic evidence may lend support to western composition. It was in

De Mort Pers 44 that Lactantius offered the earliest description of Constantine's dream in which Christ instructed the emperor to inscribe the monogram of the *nomen Christi* as the *caeleste signum Dei* on the shields of his men before the battle against Maxentius. If Lactantius composed and published this pamphlet at Trier while serving as the tutor for the emperor's son, it may not be a coincidence that the first Roman coin to bear a shield marked with the chi-rho monogram was minted for Crispus at Trier in the early 320s—for the coin, see *RIC,* vol. VII, p. 197, # 372; and Odahl, "Christian Symbols in Military Motifs," p. 68. Baynes, in "Lactantius, the *Divine Institutes*" *Byzantine Studies,* p. 350, comments on the thematic relationship of the *Divinae Institutiones* and this work:

> The prophecy of divine vengeance is thus stated in the *Divine Institutes,* its realization is proclaimed in the *De Mortibus Persecutorum:* the *Divine Institutes* is to the *De Mortibus Persecutorum* as Isaiah, ch. x, is to the proclamation of Assyria's fall in the triumph song of Nahum. And for the understanding of the work of Lactantius it may be suggested that the idea of *ultio*—of divine vengeance—is of the highest significance.

17 Themes and phrases from the *De Mortibus Persecutorum* were particularly evident in the letters Constantine issued in 324–25 to the eastern provinces in the aftermath of his "Holy War" against Licinius—recorded in Euseb., *Vita Const* II. 24–42; 46; and 48–60.

18 Lact., *Div Inst* I. 3 and 19, and IV. 29–30=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 68–71.

19 Lact., *Div Inst* III and IV *passim*.

20 The Christian advisors of Constantine were informing him of his divine commission (e.g., Lactantius in *Div Inst* VII. 26, and *De Mort Pers* 1); and the contemporary writings of the emperor reflected his growing sense of a Christian mission (e.g., Optatus, *App* 3, 5 and 7)—the contemporary evidence is detailed in Odahl, "God and Constantine."

21 Frend, in *Donatist Church,* analyzes the Donatist Schism as a movement of social and economic protest; Maureen A.Tilley, in *The Bible in Christian North Africa: The Donatist World* (Minneapolis, MN, 1997), looks at the religious sensibilities of the movement, and examines the ways in which Donatist leaders used the Bible to justify their schism; while Drake, in *Constantine and the Bishops,* pp. 212–31, sees the reaction of the emperor and the Catholics to it as the beginning of an important Church and state coalition. Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 238–47, provides a detailed list and accurate chronology of the Donatist documents from the Constantinian period.

22 The ancient sources for the origins of Donatism were: Optatus, *De Schis Donat* I. 15–19; and Augustine, *Breviculus Collationis Cum Donatistis* 3. 12–14; and *Ep* 43 and 88. Frend, in his *Donatist Church,* pp. 14–21, J.L.Maier, in *Le Dossier du Donatisme* (Berlin, 1987), pp. 128–34, and Elliott, in *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 79–82, misinterpret the "tyrannus imperator" of Optatus (*De Schis Donat* I. 17) as Maxentius rather than Maximian, and ignore the clear statements of Optatus (*De Schis Donat* I. 17–18) that Mensurius died before Maxentius ended the persecution, and incorrectly date the election of Caecilian to 311–12. Jones, in his *Constantine,* pp. 92–94, and Barnes, in "The Beginnings of Donatism," *JTS,* vol. 26 (1975), pp. 13–22, and in *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 54–56, more accurately reflect the ancient sources, and place these events in the years 304–7 as has been done here.

23 The wide diffusion and deep roots which characterized the schism in North Africa by the time Constantine got involved with it support an early date for its origins. The "Epistle of Constantine Augustus to Caecilianus, Bishop of Carthage," in Euseb., *Hist Eccl* X. 6, showed the emperor's initial attitude toward the schism.

24 Aug., *Ep* 43. 2. 4, and *Ep* 88. 1–2, recorded the approach of the party of Majorinus to Anullinus, and preserved a copy of the report of the proconsul to the emperor; and Optatus, *De Schis Donat* I. 22, quoted the petition of the dissidents. Mt 18:15–18, and I Co 6:1–8

counseled the solving of disputes among the brethren in church. A precedent for appealing to the state had been set by eastern bishops forty years earlier when they had appealed to Aurelian for help in deposing Paul of Samosata from the see of Antioch for theological heresy and questionable ethics in the 270s—Euseb., *Hist Eccl* VII. 27–30. Yet, most modern historians see the appeal of 313 as the decisive event which brought about a new era in the relations of Church and State, e.g., Frend, *Donatist Church,* pp. 146–47; and P.R.Colman-Norton, *Roman State and Christian Church,* vol. I (London, 1966), pp. 46–51; and Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops,* pp. 226–31.

25 The original letter was written in Latin, but Eusebius translated it into Greek in his *Hist Eccl* X. 5. 18–20. Miltiades was Bishop of Rome from 311 to 314, and Mark may have been a deacon or priest serving as his secretary. Reticius, Maternus, and Marinus were Gallic bishops in the cities of Autun, Cologne, and Arles, respectively.

26 He addressed Miltiades with the same title that he used for high officials of the empire—"Most Honored One" (τιμιωτατε); and confessed to him that he held rule of the provinces by "Divine Providence" (θεια πρόνοια). On the pontificate of Miltiades and his involvement in the African schism, see: Shotwell and Loomis, *See of Peter,* pp. 448–62; and McBrien, *Lives of the Popes,* pp. 56–57; and for the emergence of Christian terminology in Constantinian correspondence, consult: Kraft, *Kaiser Konstantins religiöse Entwicklung,* pp. 46–52; and Odahl, "God and Constantine," pp. 343–44.

27 Optatus, *De Schis Donat* I. 23–24; and Aug., *Brev Col cum Donat* 3. 12; and *Ep* 43. 2. 4, and 5. 16; and *Ep* 88. 3, recorded the ancient accounts of the Synod of Rome; and Jones, *Constantine,* p. 95; Frend, *Donatist Church,* pp. 148–49; and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 57, offer modern commentary.

28 Euseb., *Hist Eccl* X. 5. 21–24, and *Vita Const* I. 44–45; Optatus, *De Schis Donat* I. 25, and *Appendix* 3; and Aug., *Ep* 43. 2. 4, and *Ep* 88. 3. For Roman Arles and its mint, see: Paul MacKendrick, *Roman France* (London, 1971), pp. 61–64; King, *Roman Gaul and Germany,* pp. 115, and 184–85; and Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, pp. 226ff.

29 The episcopal letter is in *Hist Eccl* X. 5. 21–24, and the vicarial epistle is in *De Schis Donat, App* 3.

30 Optatus, *App* 3=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 113–17, with the italicized words in Latin reading:

> commoveri possit Summa Divinitas…in me ipsum, cuius curae nutu suo caelesti terrena omnia moderanda commisit…. Tunc enim revera et plenissime potero esse securus et semper de promptissima benevolentia Potentissimi Dei prosperrima et optima quaeque sperare, cum universos sensero debito cultu Catholicae religionis Sanctissimum Deum concordi observantiae fraternitate venerari. Amen.

Baynes, in *Constantine the Great,* pp. 10–12, and Jones, in *Constantine,* pp. 96–97, both note that fear of the Christian Deity was a key element in the religious thinking of Constantine; Odahl, in "God and Constantine," pp. 344–45, agrees and pinpoints the origin of this fear in his "readings in biblical texts and Lactantian works, and his analysis of recent political events under the influence of the themes therein, [which] were obviously affecting Constantine's definition of his imperial role."

31 The bishops who attended were named in the report of the council's actions and in the list of its canons which were sent to the Bishop of Rome. A postscript in the former document, preserved in Optatus, *App* 4, and the text of *Vita Const* I. 44 (quoted above) make it clear that Constantine was present in Arles for the council. On the presence of the emperor, see: Barnes, *New Empire,* p. 242, and *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 58; Odahl, "Constantine's Epistle to the Bishops at the Council of Arles," p. 288; and Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops,* pp. 226–27.

32 Optatus, *App* 4—"Concilium Episcoporum Arelatense ad Silvestrum Papam"; the "Canones ad Silvestrum" in *Concilia Galliae, A. 314–505,* pp. 8–15; Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 44–45; and Aug., *Ep* 43. 4, and *Ep* 88. 3, were the main ancient sources for the Council of Arles; Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 97–98; Frend, *Donatist Church,* pp. 151–52; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 58; and Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops,* pp. 219–31, offer modern commentary. For the controversial canons 7, 8, and 3, which allowed service to the state, consult: Palanque, *Church in the Christian Roman Empire,* pp. 30–33; Harnack, *Militia Christi,* pp. 88–89; Campenhausen, "Der Kriegdienst," p. 261; Bainton, "Early Church and War," p. 200, and *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace,* pp. 80–87; and Odahl, *Constantine and the Militarization of Christianity,* pp. 208–12.

33 The "Epistula Constantini Ad Episcopos Catholicos" was preserved in Optatus, *App* 5=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 117–20, with the italicized phrases in Latin reading:

> Constantinus Augustus episcopis Catholicis carissimis fratribus salutem! Aeterna et religiosa inconprehensibilis pietas Dei nostri nequaquam permittit humanam condicionem diutius in tenebris oberrare…. Fuerunt enim in me primitus, quae iustitia carere videbantur, nec ulla putabam videre supernam potentiam, quae intra secreta pectoris mei gererem…. Sed Deus Omnipotens in caeli specula residens tribuit, quod non merebar; certe iam neque dici neque enumerari possunt ea, quae caelesti sua in me famulum suum benivolentia concessit.
>
> Sanctissimi antistites Christi Salvatoris, fratres carissimi!… praeclarissima luce legis Catholicae…!
>
> Divinitas propitia…. Christi clementia…. Quae vis malignitatis in eorundem pectoribus perseverat…. Meum iudicium postulant, qui ipse iudicium Christi expecto. Dico enim, ut se veritas habet, sacerdotum iudicium ita debet haberi, ac si ipse Dominus residens iudicet…quod Christi magisterio sunt edocti….
>
> Fratres carissimi…vos, qui Domini Salvatoris sequimini viam, patientem adhibete…et…meique mementote, ut mei Salvator noster semper misereatur.
>
> Incolumes vos Deus Omnipotens tribuat votis meis et vestris per saecula, fratres carissimi.

While Otto Seeck questioned the authenticity of many of the documents preserved in the *Appendix* of Optatus in "Quellen und Urkunden über die Anfänge des Donatismus," *ZKG,* vol. 10 (1889), pp. 505–68, their authenticity was defended by Louis Duchesne in "Le dossier du Donatisme," *Mélanges d'archéologies et d'histoire de*

l'école française de Rome, vol. 10 (1890), pp. 589–650, and Norman Baynes, in "Optatus," *JTS,* vol. 26 (1924), pp. 37–44. A few scholars, such as Kraft, *Kaiser Konstantins religiöse Entwicklung,* pp. 46–61, and Frend, *Donatist Church,* pp. 152–53, accepted the ancient authenticity for, but doubted the Constantinian authorship of, *App* 5—the "Epistula Constantini Ad Episcopos Catholicos." Their position was based upon an incorrect dating of the first war with Licinius (314 instead of 316) and an incomplete apprehension of the religious education of Constantine between 312 and 314. For the most detailed analysis of this letter, and defense of its Constantinian authorship, consult: Charles Odahl, "Constantine's Epistle to the Bishops at the Council of Arles: A Defense of Imperial Authorship," pp. 274–89. Corcoran, *Empire of the Tetrarchs,* p. 304; Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* p. 30, note 15; and Digeser, *Making of a Christian Empire,* p. 171, have accepted my views.

34 Odahl, "Constantine's Epistle to the Bishops," provides a thorough analysis of the Christian terminology in this letter. The Lactantian phrases in the personal confession of this epistle may come from *Div Inst* I. Preface, and *De Ira Dei* 1. Both Odahl, ibid., and Digeser, "Lactantius and Constantine's Letter to Arles," stress the Lactantian echoes in this missive.

35 The investigation of Felix was preserved in Optatus, *App* 2—"Acta Purgationis Felicis"; Aug., *Ep* 88. 3–4, also mentioned the investigation, and recorded the letter of Constantine to Probianus which ordered the transport of Ingentius to Rome; Optatus, *De Schis Donat* I. 26, recorded the mission of the two bishops Eunomius and Olympius to Carthage and the resulting riots; Aug., *Ep* 43. 2. 4, and *Ep* 88. 3 mentioned the judgment of Constantine against the Donatists; Optatus, *App* 7—"Epistula Constantini ad Celsum Vicarium Africae," contained the threat of the emperor to go to Africa; and Aug., *Contra Cresconium* III. 71. 82, preserved an excerpt of the epistle of Constantine to Eumelius, the Vicar of Africa, explaining his judgment for Caecilian, and *Ep* 88. 3, noted confiscation of Donatist property. For modern accounts of the events from August of 314 to November of 316, see: Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 98–103, and Frend, *Donatist Church,* pp. 153–59, who use an early date for the first war with Licinius; and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 58–60, and *New Empire,* pp. 242–45, and Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 90–93, who present a more accurate sequence of events. Constantine's growing sense of mission was reflected in his epistle to Celsus, in Optatus, *App* 7=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* p. 122: "Quid potius agi a me pro instituto meo ipsiusque principis munere oportet, quam ut discussis erroribus omnibusque temeritatibus amputatis, veram religionem universos concordemque simplicitatem atque meritam Omnipotenti Deo culturam praesentare perficiam?" Baynes, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 10–28; Alföldi, *Conversion of Constantine,* pp. 32–35; Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 38–39, and 61–67; Odahl, "God and Constantine," *passim;* and Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine, passim,* emphasize this.

36 The Decennalia of Constantine in Rome was mentioned in Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 48; the *adventus* (arrival) and *profectio* (departure) of the emperor with associated *ludi* (games) were recorded in the imperial cult section of a codex calendar composed in Rome in 354, printed in CIL, vol. I^2, pp. 268 and 272, and transcribed and explained by Michele Renee Salzman in *On Roman Time: The Codex-Calendar of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1990), pp. 131–46; and subscriptions in the *Codex Theod XI.* 30. 3, I. 2.

2, and X. 1. 1, also place Constantine at Rome in the summer of 315. Cf. Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 72–73, and 77, who notes that the two *adventus* listings of 21 and 18 July in the codex calendar of 354 seem to have recorded the two separate arrivals of Constantine for his Decennalia in 315 and his later Vicennalia in 326.

37 The classic study on the Arch of Constantine is that of Hans P.L'Orange and Armin von Gerkan, *Der spätantike Bildschmuck des Konstantinsbogens* (Berlin, 1939), with much of the artistic analysis therein summarized later by L'Orange in *Art Forms and Civic Life in the Late Roman Empire,* pp. 85–104. The sculptural program of the arch is also described in Bernard Berenson, *The Arch of Constantine or The Decline of Form* (New York, 1954); MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 84–86; Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 47–49; Bowder, *Age of Constantine and Julian,* pp. 24–28, whose "fitting monument" quotation comes from the latter page; MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity,* pp. 35–37; and Patrizio Pensabene, *Arco di Costantino: Tra archeologia e archeometria* (Rome, 1999). The old view of the arch as a hodge-podge and hastily made structure due to lack of artisans and lack of time needs to be revised in light of what is now known of the economic and cultural recovery which had been going on since the First Tetrarchy, and the intention of the Senate to honor Constantine by comparing him with the "good emperors" of the past as described in this book. The dedicatory inscription of the arch is listed in *CIL,* vol. VI, 1139=Grünewald, *Constantinus Maximus Augustus,* p. 64, and p. 217, #239, and reads in Latin:

IMP CAES FL CONSTANTINO MAXIMO P F AUGUSTO S P Q R
QUOD INSTINCTU DIVINITATIS MENTIS MAGNITUDINE CUM EXERCITU SUO
TAM DE TYRANNO QUAM DE OMNI EIUS FACTIONE UNO TEMPORE IUSTIS REMPUBLICAM ULTIS EST ARMIS
ARCUM TRIUMPHIS INSIGNEM DICAVIT.

The *instinctu Divinitatis* phrase in the dedicatory inscription of the arch has been interpreted as part of the common and overlapping religious vocabulary of third- and fourth-century Neoplatonic philosophers, Stoic pantheists, Solar syncretists, and Christian monotheists who were looking for a "Highest Divinity" around which the imperial populace could unite, and, thus, an ideal choice by the Senate to acknowledge the conversion of Constantine in neutral and syncretistic religious terminology on a public monument by Alföldi, *Conversion of Constantine,* pp. 69–72; MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 110–13; Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion,* pp. 281–91; and Odahl, "A Pagan's Reaction to Constantine's Conversion," pp. 51–54. Alföldi, ibid., pp. 132–33, traces similar phraseology from Cicero to Firmicus Maternus; cf. the recent article of Linda Jones Hall, "Cicero's instinctu divino and Constantine's instinctu divinitatis: The Evidence of the Arch of Constantine for the Senatorial View of the 'Vision' of Constantine," *JECS,* vol. 6, 4 (1998), pp. 647–71. On Solar syncretism as a bridge between

paganism and Christianity, and the Solar Christ (or Christus-Helios) mosaic of the Vatican Julii Tomb, see: Jocelyn Toynbee and John Ward Perkins, *The Shrine of St. Peter and the Vatican Excavations* (London, 1956), pp. 72–74, and 116–17; MacMullen, *Constantine,* p. 112, and Pl. III; and Odahl, "A Pagan's Reaction to Constantine's Conversion," p. 53, and Pls. VII and VIII.

38 Lact., *De Mort Pers* 44; and Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 28–31.

39 The Decennalia medallion is listed by Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, p. 364, # 36. Numismatic analyses of this special silver issue and its imagery are provided by: A.Alföldi, "The Initials of Christ on the Helmet of Constantine," *Studies in Roman Economic and Social History in Honor of Allen Chester Johnson* (Princeton, NJ, 1951), pp. 303–11, and "Das Kreuzzepter Konstantins des Grossen, *Schweizerische Münzblätter,* vol. 4, 16 (1954), pp. 81–86; Konrad Kraft, "Das Silbermedaillon Constantins des Grossen mit dem Christusmonogramm auf dem Helm," *Jahrbuch für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte* (1954–55), pp. 151–78; Bruun, "Christian Signs on the Coins of Constantine," pp. 8–10 and 23–24; Bastien, "Le chrisme dans la numismatique de la dynastie constantinienne," pp. 112–13, and "The Horse's Head and Imperial Bust on Roman Coins," *SAN,* vol. 14, 1 (1983), pp. 6–8; Odahl, "Christian Symbolism in Military Motifs on Constantine's Coinage," pp. 67–68, and "Constantinian Coin Motifs in Ancient Literary Sources," p. 8; and Wendelin Kellner, "Christuszeichen auf Münzen der Zeit Constantins I und seiner Söhne," *Money Trend* (September, 1999), pp. 52–53. Several scholars have seen the Christian symbolism on this medallion as graphic confirmation of Constantine's conversion, and an early attempt of the emperor to portray in art what he was writing in his Donatist epistles—e.g., Alföldi, *Conversion of Constantine,* pp. 42–43; MacMullen, *Constantine,* p. 113; Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 42–43; Leeb, *Konstantin und Christus,* pp. 29–42; and Odahl, "God and Constantine," pp. 347–50.

40 *Vita Const* I. 48; Alföldi, *Conversion of Constantine,* pp. 73–75, sees this refusal to participate in pagan rituals as the beginning of the ultimate estrangement of the largely pagan Senate from Constantine.

41 This aspect of Constantine's church-building program at Rome was alluded to by H.von Schönebeck, "Beiträge zur Religionspolitik des Maxentius und Constantin," *Klio,* vol. 43 (1939), pp. 87ff.; and Alföldi, *Conversion of Constantine,* pp. 50–52; and has been developed at greater length in Alexander, "Studies in Constantinian Church Architecture," *RAC,* vol. 49 (1973), p. 42; Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City,* pp. 20–21, and 30–31, and *Three Christian Capitals,* pp. 26–31; and Odahl, "Christian Basilicas of Constantinian Rome," pp. 4–7.

42 For studies on pre-Constantinian church architecture, consult: Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture,* pp. 23–38; Milburn, *Early Christian Art and Architecture,* pp. 9–18; and White, *Building God's House in the Roman World.* For studies on the evolution of secular basilicas into Christian churches, see: J.B.Ward-Perkins, "Constantine and the Origins of the Christian Basilica," *PBSR,* vol. 22 (1954), pp. 69–90; L'Orange, *Art Forms and Civic Life in the Late Roman Empire,* pp. 70–85; R.Krautheimer, "The Constantinian Basilica," *DOP,* vol. 21 (1967), pp. 115–40, and *Rome: Profile of a City,* p. 21; and Odahl, "Christian Basilicas of Constantinian Rome," pp. 7–9.

43 For the ancient text, consult: *Liber Pont* XXXIIII. 9–15=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 140–42; and for modern scholarship, see: Richard Krautheimer and Spencer Corbett, "The Constantinian Basilica of the Lateran," *Antiquity,* vol. 34 (1960), pp. 201–6; Alexander, "Studies in Constantinian Church Architecture," *RAC,* vol. 47 (1971), pp. 284–90; Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City,* pp. 21–24, and *Three Christian Capitals,* pp. 12–20;

Fabrizio Mancinelli, *The Catacombs of Rome and the Origins of Christianity* (Florence, 1994), pp. 10–11; and Odahl, "Christian Basilicas of Constantinian Rome," pp. 10–12.

44 *Origo* 4. 12 preserved the story of the illegitimacy of Maxentius; and Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 51–53 recorded the building of a Christian chapel at the Oak of Mamre at the request of Eutropia.

45 For the *Thermae Helenae,* the earliest inscription, recorded in *CIL,* vol. VI, 1136, has to be dated between 316 and 324, after Helena's second grandson had been born, but before she had received the title of *Augusta*. It is now displayed on the wall above her sarcophagus in the Sala a Croce of the Vatican Museum, and says that "Our venerable Lady Helena, mother of our Lord Constantine the Augustus and grandmother of our most blessed and excellent Caesars, restored these baths which had been destroyed by fire." The later one, in *CIL,* vol. VI, 1134, dates from shortly after her death (late 327). It is now displayed in the Cappella Gregoriana at the rear of her palace church, and was a dedicatory inscription on the base of a statue of Helena erected by a certain Julius Maximilianus, who served as a *consularis aquarum* ("water commissioner") in Rome—listed in *PLRE,* vol. I, p. 575. For scholarship on the inscriptions and the baths, see: Joseph F.Merriman, "The Empress Helena and the Aqua Augustea," *Archeologia Classica,* vol. 29, 2 (1977), pp. 436–46; and Pohlsander, *Helena,* pp. 73–76. Euseb., in *Vita Const* III. 42–47, related that Helena was converted by Constantine, and recorded her pious actions and church constructions during her Holy Land pilgrimage. *Lib Pont* XXXIIII. 22=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* p. 142, provided the ancient names for Helena's palace chapel; while Alexander, "Studies in Constantinian Church Architecture," (1971), pp. 290–91; Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City,* p. 24, and *Three Christian Capitals,* pp. 23–24; and Odahl, "Christian Basilicas of Constantinian Rome," pp. 12–14, offer modern reconstructions of the ancient church.

46 The reading in *Liber Pont* XXXIIII. 16=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* p. 145 "Eodem tempore Augustus Constantinus ex rogatu Silvestri episcopi fecit basilicam beato Petro apostolo" seems to place the decision to build the Petrine Basilica "at the same time" as the emperor was building the Lateran church which the previous seven chapters had described. The alternate reading of "Item huius temporibus" ("Likewise in his times") would also place the building of the Vatican Basilica during the reign of Sylvester (314–35). For the papal reign of Sylvester, see: Cheetam, *Keepers of the Keys,* pp. 17–19; McBrien, *Lives of the Popes,* pp. 57–58; and Eamon Duffy, *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes* (New Haven, 1997), pp. 18–23.

47 *Liber Pont* XXXIIII. 16–20=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 145–49 offered an ancient description of the Petrine Basilica, and at XXXIIII. 17 recorded that Constantine placed a cross of gold in the tomb shrine carrying the inscription: "Constantinus Augustus et Helena Augusta hanc domum regalem [auro exornamus quam] simili fulgore coruscans aula circumdat" ("Constantine the Augustus and Helena the Augusta [adorn with gold] this royal house [which] a court shining with similar splendor surrounds"). The *domus regalis* was the tomb monument while the *aula* was the basilican church which Constantine and his mother probably dedicated in 326. For scholarship detailing the archaeological work under the floor of the modern San Pietro between 1939 and 1951, and collating that with ancient literary descriptions and artistic illustrations, see: B.M.Apollonj Ghetti, A.Ferrua, E.Josi, and E.Kirschbaum, *Esplorazioni sotto la Confessione di San Pietro in Vaticano* (Vatican City, 1951); B.M.Apollonj Ghetti, *La tomba e le basiliche di San Pietro al Vaticano* (Rome, 1954); Toynbee and Ward-Perkins, *Shrine of Saint Peter;* Engelbert Kirschbaum, *The Tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul* (New York, 1959); Alexander, "Studies in Constantinian Church Architecture," (1971), pp. 292–95; Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City,* pp. 26–28; Mancinelli, *Catacombs of Rome,* pp. 12–16; and Odahl, "Christian Basilicas of Constantinian Rome," pp. 15–19.

48 *Liber Pont* XXXIIII. 21=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 146–47 gave Constantine credit for building the Pauline Basilica. For modern work at the Ostian site, see: Kirschbaum,

Tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul, pp. 165–94; Alexander, "Studies in Constantinian Church Architecture," (1971), p. 295; Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City,* pp. 41–43; Mancinelli, *Catacombs of Rome,* p. 52; and Odahl, "Christian Basilicas of Constantinian Rome," pp. 19–21.

49 *Liber Pont* XXXIIII. 23–27=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 150–53 provided the primary ancient source for these four martyrial churches of Constantine. Richard Krautheimer, "Mensa-Coemeterium-Martyrium," *Cahiers archéologiques,* vol. 2 (1960), pp. 15–40, gives a detailed survey of the modern archaeological work at the sites of these four structures, and a lucid account of their original purpose as funeral banquet halls where the Christian faithful could be buried in the floor tombs and commemorated in special masses next to the graves of famous martyrs. For more recent work on these martyrial-cemeterial basilicas, consult: Alexander, "Studies in Constantinian Church Architecture," (1971), pp. 295–301; Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City,* pp. 24–28, and *Three Christian Capitals,* pp. 23–25; Mancinelli, *Catacombs of Rome,* pp. 17–20, 39–43, and 49–51; and Odahl, "Christian Basilicas of Constantinian Rome," pp. 21–26.

50 *Liber Pont* XXXIIII also waxed eloquent on the lavish service implements Constantine donated to each of his churches for their worship services, and listed the numerous landed estates he granted to the papacy to provide resources for the maintenance of the edifices. Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals,* p. 23, estimated that the latter totaled "nearly 25,000 gold solidi." A twelfth-century canon of St. Peter's who wrote the guidebook on the *Mirabilia Urbis Romae,* tr. by F.M.Nichols and ed. by E.Gardiner (New York, 1986), pp. 29–30, reflected the pride that medieval Romans still had in the greater Constantinian basilicas. MacMullen, *Constantine,* p. 117, aptly summarizes the church building program in Rome: "Such a campaign of construction, surrounding the city with a circle of jewels like a tiara, had not been seen within men's memories"; and Odahl, "Christian Basilicas of Constantinian Rome," p. 28, emphasizes "The fact that six out of the seven most important churches of Rome were of Constantinian origin reveals the fundamental role the Christian emperor and his family played in Christianizing the city of Rome and in establishing the norms of church architecture."

Notes to Chapter VII

1 For the decade after 315, the *Origo Constantini,* the *Historia Nova* of Zosimus, and the Latin epitomes provided important information on the political and military aspects of the struggles of Constantine and Licinius, but were silent on the theological conflicts in the east. The *Vita Constantini* of Eusebius and the *Historiae Ecclesiasticae* of his continuators dealt with the religious aspects of the wars between Constantine and Licinius, and contained much material on the Arian controversy and the Nicene Council. Optatus offered some details on Constantine's later dealings with the Donatists, and Athanasius gave information on Arianism and the Nicene Council. The use of Christian symbols on the imperial coinage, and the expression of Christian sentiments in imperial letters, laws, and sermons revealed Constantine's growing sense of mission in service to the Christian religion. Among the modern general studies on Constantine containing useful material on the civil wars and the Arian controversy, see: Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 109–43, and MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 96–183 (but with incorrect dates for the first war); Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 50–68, and 142–50; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 66–77, and 191–219; Grant, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 40–50, and 167–74; Pohlsander, *The Emperor Constantine,* pp. 38–51; Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 121–214; and Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops,* pp. 235–57; and for a chronology of imperial itineraries, consult: Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 73–76, and 82–84.

2 The alliance and earlier relations of Constantine and Licinius were described in Chapters IV and V above. A chronology based on the *Consularia Constantinopolitana* and corrupt postings in the *Codex Theodosianus*—Otto Seeck's *Regesten der Kaiser und Päpste für die Jahre 311 bis 476* (Stuttgart, 1919), pp. 142, and 162ff.—which offered an early date for the first conflict between Constantine and Licinius, caused many modern scholars, such as Baynes, *Constantine the Great,* p. 12, Piganiol, *L'empereur Constantin,* pp. 108–9, Jones, *Constantine,* p. 110, and MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 96–97, to date the first break between the emperors in the autumn of 314. After careful reassessments of the numismatic, legal, epigraphic, and narrative sources, Bruun in *The Constantinian Coinage of Arelate* (Helsinki, 1953), pp. 17–21, and *RIC,* vol. VII, p. 76; and Barnes, in *New Empire,* pp. 72–73, and *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 66–68, have provided more correct chronologies for the reign of Constantine, and redated his first war with Licinius to 316–17. A few scholars, such as König, *Origo Constantini,* pp. 119–23; and Michael DiMaio, Jörn Zeuge, and Jane Bethune, "Proelium Cibalense et Prolium Campi Ardiensis: The First Civil War of Constantine I and Licinius I,"*AncW,* vol. 21, 3 and 4 (1990), pp. 67–91, have tried to defend the old chronology, but without much success. Christopher Ehrhardt, in "Monumental Evidence for the Date of Constantine's First War against Licinius," *AncW,* vol. 23, 2 (1992), pp. 87–94, posits that the sculptural reliefs on the Arch of Constantine, which "emphasized the *concordia* between the two emperors, and their equality of status," could not have been cut if a war was being fought between the emperors in 314–15. Hans A.Pohlsander, in "The Date of the *Bellum Cibalense:* A Re-examination," *AncW,* vol. 26, 1 (1995), pp. 89–101, offers a detailed analysis of all the relevant data, and concludes that "an objective analysis…must favor 316 as the date of the *bellum Cibalense*" Based on the narrative in Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 41–48, the attitude toward the emperors in Lact., *De Mort Pers,* and the data adduced by Bruun, Barnes, Ehrhardt, and Pohlsander, I have accepted the later date here, as have Grant, in *Constantine the Great,* pp. 40–43; and Elliott, in *Christianity of' Constantine,* pp. 122–27.

3 Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 49–50, and Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 3 described the rising tensions between the emperors.

4 *Origo* 5. 14–15 recorded the union of Anastasia and Bassianus, and the fraternal relation of the latter to Senecio. Consult *PLRE,* vol. I, p. 58 for Anastasia; p. 150 for Bassianus; and pp. 820–21 for Senecio.

5 *Origo* 5. 17 and 19; Vict., *Caes* 41. 6, and *Epitome* 41. 4; Oros., *Hist.,* VII. 28. 22; and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 20. 2 mentioned the imperial heirs. See *PLRE,* vol. I, pp. 223, and 509–10; and Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 44–45, for more data on Constantinus II and Licinianus.

6 *Origo* 5. 14 recorded: "Post aliquantum deinde temporis Constantium Constantinus ad Licinium misit, persuadens ut Bassianus Caesar fieret, qui habebat alteram Constantini sororem Ana[s]tasiam, ut exemplo Maximiani inter Constantinum et Licinium Bassianus Italiam medius optineret." Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 66, and Grant, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 40–41, read the plan of Constantine as cynical; but Jones, *Constantine,* p. 109, and I, see it as a sincere attempt to keep peace.

7 *Origo* 5. 15 provided the details:

> Et Licinio talia frustrante, per Senicionem Bassiani fratrem, qui Licinio fidus erat, in Constantinum Bassianus armatur. Qui tamen in conatu deprehensus, Constantino iubente convictus et stratus est. Cum Senicio auctor insidiarum posceretur ad poenam, negante Licinio fracta concordia est; additis etiam causis quod apud Emonam Constantini imagines statuasque deiecerat. Bellum deinde apertum convenit ambobus.

Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 18, attempted to blame Constantine for the war; but the facts support neither him, nor the modern historians fooled by him.

8 Among the ancient sources, *Origo* 5.16, and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 18 provided the most material for describing the battle; while Eutrop., *Brev* X. 5, Vict., *Epitome* 41. 5, and Oros., *Hist* VII. 28. 19, just mentioned the site of the conflict and the victory of Constantine. Cf. Jones, *Constantine,* p. 110; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 67; and Grant, *Constantine the Great,* p. 42.

9 *Origo* 5. 17–18 recorded the movements of the emperors before, during, and after the Battle on the Arda Plain; while Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 18–19 offered an account of the battle itself. Both ancient authors called Valens a Caesar, but he was given the title of Augustus on the coins of the two eastern mints which advertized his ephemeral reign: *RIC,* vol. VII, p. 644—Cyzicus, # 7, and p. 706, Alexandria—# 19. Among modern scholars, Jones, *Constantine,* p. 110, offers a similar account of the events from the Battle of Cibalae to the Battle of the Arda Plain; but Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 67, and Grant, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 42–43, who accept questionable emendations of the *Origo* and misunderstand the strategy of Constantine, place the base of Constantine at Philippolis rather than at Philippi, and locate the battle site up in the plain of the Hebrus River rather than down along the Arda River. Cf. König, *Origo Constantini,* pp. 126–29, for details.

10 *Origo* 5. 18–19; Vict., *Caes* 41. 6–7, and *Epitome* 41. 4; Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 6; and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 20 were the ancient sources which recorded the terms of the treaty of 317. A fragment from the lost history of Petrus Patricius, in *FHG,* vol. IV, p. 189=Lieu and Montserrat, *From Constantine to Julian,* pp. 57–58, contained an account of the negotiations between Mestrianus and Constantine, and revealed the anger of the emperor. See Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 73 and 198–208, for the location of Constantine, and the diocesan and provincial divisions of the empire at this time. For other modern accounts of the treaty, consult: Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 67–68; Grant, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 43–44; and Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 126–27.

11 Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 69, 73–76, and 83, chronicles the principal residences and movements of Constantine and Crispus between 317 and 324, and cites the evidence pertaining thereto; on p. 43, he lists the children of Constantine and Fausta; on pp. 80, 82, and 84, he also lists the residences and movements of Licinius and Licinius Caesar during these years. For more data on the children of Constantine and Licinius, cf. *PLRE,* vol. I, pp. 233 (Crispus 4); 223 (Constantinus 3); 226 (Constantius 8); 222 (Constantina 2); 220 (Constans 3); 409–10 (Helena 2); and pp. 509–10 (Licinianus 4). On the DIVI coinage of Constantine and the PROVIDENTIAE coins of Licinius, see: Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, pp. 180 (Trier), 310–12 (Rome), 394–95 (Aquileia), 429–30 (Siscia), 502–3 (Thessalonica); 544–47 (Heraclea), and 603–5 (Nicomedia); cf. Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 158–69.

12 Licinius and Crispus were designated consuls for 318; Constantine and Licinianus for 319; Constantine and Constantine II for 320; and Licinius and Licinianus for 321—until a formal break occurred between the Augusti in March 321 and they began designating different consuls for their respective domains. See Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 91–97, for a list of the consuls from 284 to 337, and the sources, such as the *Calendar of 354* and the *Paschal Chronicle,* upon which it depends. Consult Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, *passim;* and Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 158–69, for the coinage data.

13 For the early phases of the emperor's education in the Christian faith, involvement in Church affairs, and patronage of Christianity, see Chs. V and VI above.

14 The law against facial branding was recorded in *Codex Theod* IX. 40. 2 (315 or 16) and offered the rationale "that the face, which has been made in the likeness of celestial beauty, should not be disfigured"—paraphrasing *Gn* 1. 27; the law outlawing crucifixion has been

lost, but Vict., *Caes* 41. 4, and Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 8. 13, recorded it, with the latter commenting that "he regarded the cross with particular reverence." Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 9. 6, recorded that Constantine made three laws allowing the granting of freedom in the churches, and explained that the emperor did this to make manumission easier. The first law is no longer extant; but the second, addressed to Protogenes, the Bishop of Serdica (316), was preserved in the *Codex Justinianus* I. 13. 1; and the third, addressed to Ossius, Bishop of Cordova and his religious advisor (321), was recorded in the *Codex Theod* IV. 7. 1=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 108–9. St. Paul, in Ga 3:28, had written of the equality of all people in the Church; and Lact., in *Div Inst* V. 15, echoed his thoughts and contrasted the class systems of the GrecoRoman world with the equality in the Church. Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 92–103, provides a full chapter on the Christian attitude to slavery, and the manumission legislation of Constantine; cf. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 50–51; and Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* p. 108. Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 9, in a long chapter listing the legislative favors of Constantine for the clergy, mentioned that the emperor "exempted the clergy everywhere from taxation, and permitted litigants to appeal to the decision of the bishops if they preferred them to the state rulers." *Codex Theod* I. 27. 1 (318) preserved an early law on *episcopale iudicium,* while *Constitutiones Sirmondianae* 1 (333) recorded a later and fuller version, which gave the reasoning behind this privilege to the Christian prefect Ablabius. Constantine's knowledge of the New Testament admonitions to Christians to settle disputes in the Church (Mt 18 and I Co 6), and of the episcopal arbitration system is evident from his handling of the Donatist dispute, and his language in the "Epistle to the Catholic Bishops" at Arles (Optatus, *App* 5) and in the law in *Const Sirm* 1. For modern treatments of the Christian legislation of Constantine in this period, consult again: Gaudemet, "La legislation religieuse de Constantin," pp. 32–41; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 49–53, who notes that "Constantine also began to remold Roman law and the attitudes of Roman society in a Christian direction" (51); and Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 97–114, and 124–30.

15 *Liber Pont* XXXIIII mentioned other churches Constantine patronized in Italy besides the most famous ones at Rome described above in Ch. VI; and the references in Euseb., *Hist Eccl* X and *Vita Const* I, along with many archaeological finds around the Mediterranean Basin, confirm that there was much church-building activity in the years after the Constantine's conversion. The mints which Constantine used after the treaty of 317 were in London, Trier, Lyon, Arles, Ticinum, Rome, Aquileia, Siscia, Sirmium, and Thessalonica; the tetrarchic mints at Carthage and Serdica had been closed several years earlier, and Arles (opened in 313) and Sirmium (opened in 320) replaced them. Gold and silver coins were rare, and normally issued only from mints where Constantine or Crispus were resident or making special visits. The gold types at this time were often religiously neutral, celebrating the "Joy of the Romans," or the "Victory of the Emperors," etc. Bronze coins were issued from all of Constantine's mints, and in mass quantities. They more accurately reflected the religious evolution in imperial policy in this period. The starting and ending dates for the different coin types listed in the text varied a little from mint to mint; Mars lasted at Arles to 319, Sol at Sirmium to 323; and Constantine minted coins pairing Licinius with Jupiter until 321 at some of his mints. However, by the early 320s, Constantine had completely disassociated himself from the pagan gods, and had openly broken politically and religiously from Licinius. For the individual mints, and the sequence of types within them, see: Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, *passim,* and Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 158–66, and 239–40; and for the appearance of Christian signs on Constantinian coinage between 315–21, see: Bruun, "Christian Signs on the Coins of Constantine," pp. 5–21; Bastien, "Le chrisme dans la numismatique de la dynastie constantinienne," pp. 111–14; Odahl, "Christian Symbolism on Constantine's Siscia Helmet Coins," *SAN,* vol. 8, 4 (1977), pp. 56–58, "Christian Symbolism in Military Motifs on Constantine's Coinage," pp. 67–68, and "Constantinian

Coin Motifs in Ancient Literary Sources," pp. 8–9; and Kellner, Christuszeichen auf Münzen der Zeit Constantins I und seiner Söhne," pp. 52–55.

16 For the victory of Licinius over Maximin Daia and the ending of the persecution in the east, see Ch. V above. For the teachings of Iamblichus and the influence of his circle at the courts of Licinius, consult: Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 68–69; and Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*—with a review of the latter by Odahl, in CH, vol. 66, 3 (1997), pp. 341–42. For the connection of Licinius to the impious, and of Constantia to the Christians, see: Euseb., *Vita Const* I. 49, and Pohlsander, "Constantia," pp. 156–57.

17 The pagan Victor, in *Caes* 41. 1–7, and the Christian Eusebius, in *Hist Eccl* X. 8, and *Vita Const* I. 55, gave equally negative views on the laws and governance of Licinius. Barnes, in *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 69, comments that the different ways in which Constantine and Licinius carried out the census of 321 "reveal the difference between political genius and mediocrity." Cf. Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 124–30.

18 The mints which Licinius controlled after the treaty of 317 were at Heraclea, Nicomedia, Cyzicus, Antioch and Alexandria. He minted gold *aurei* only from Nicomedia and Antioch, but bronze *folles* from all five of his mints in this period. For the individual mints and the sequence of types within them, consult: Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, *passim;* and Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 166–69, and 239–40.

19 For the consuls in this period, and the epigraphic evidence which shows that a formal break occurred in the year 321, see: Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 95–96, and note 24; and for the coinage data, consult: Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, imperial mint listings for the years 320–24. *Paneg* X (IV). 36–37, mentioned the journey of Crispus to the court of Constantine in early 321; and Bruun, ibid., pp. 470–71, lists the special gold medallions and coins minted at Sirmium celebrating the *adventus* of Crispus, and the consular procession of Crispus and Constantine II during the March meeting. Postings in the *Codex Theod* (XVI. 10. 1, IX. 3.1, II. 19. 2, and IX. 42. 1) placed Constantine at Serdica in December 320 and February 321, but *Codex Theod* XI. 19. 1 placed him at Sirmium in April 321. The latter posting, the gold coin issues at Sirmium, and the central location of Sirmium between the provinces of Constantine and those of Crispus, favor Sirmium as the location for the imperial conference, as listed by Bruun in *RIC,* vol. VII, p. 77; although Barnes, in *New Empire,* p. 83, and *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 73, prefers Serdica.

20 The manumission law dedicated to Ossius was recorded in *Codex Theod* IV. 7. 1 =Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 108–9; the law on legacies to the Church in *Codex Theod* XVI. 2. 4=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 106–7; and the Sunday legislation in *Codex Theod* II. 8. 1=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 107–8, with the accounts of its applications in the imperial courts and military camps of Constantine in Euseb., *Vita Const* IV. 18–23. For modern commentaries on these laws, see: Gaudemet, "La legislation religieuse de Constantin," pp. 38–48; Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 92–129; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 50–52; and Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 108–10, and 129–30. Augustine, in *Contra Partem Donati Post Gesta* 31. 54, and 33. 56, preserved the essentials of the letter of Constantine to Verinus, the Vicar of Africa, which allowed exiled Donatist bishops to return to their sees (5 May 321); and Optatus, in *App* 9, recorded the letter of Constantine to the Catholic bishops and laity of Africa about the same time explaining his action—about which consult: Frend, *Donatist Church,* pp. 159–62; and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 60. Constantine appears to have appointed a Christian Praetorian Prefect, Iunius Bassus, to guide Crispus in Gaul, and to have employed a pagan prefect, Petronius Annianus, at his own court between the civil wars; but he named a friend and correspondent of Lactantius, the Christian Acilius Severus, as one of the consuls for 323. For the ancient evidence on these men, consult: *PLRE,* vol. I, pp. 154–55 for Iunius Bassus; pp. 68–69 for Petronius Annianus; and pp. 834–35 for Acilius Severus; and also cf. Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 128–29, and pp. 96, and 102. Constantine's laws against divination were preserved in *Codex Theod* IX. 16. 1–3; with modern assessments by Gaudemet in "La legislation

religieuse de Constantin," pp. 50–52; Alföldi in *Conversion of Constantine,* pp. 75–78; and Barnes in *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 52–53. MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 128–32, and Barnes, ibid., p. 70, have some interesting comments on Constantine's rising popularity with the Christians, but his need not to alienate the pagans in the period between his two civil wars with Licinius.

21 Eusebius recorded the Licinian Persecution in *Hist Eccl* X. 8, and *Vita Const* I. 49—II. 2; Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 3, and Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 7, repeated some of this material; *Origo* 5. 20, and Oros., *Hist* VII. 28. 18, reported that "repentina rabie suscitatus Licinius omnes Christianos a palatio iussit expelli"; and Vict., *Caes* 41. 5, hinted at the persecution in listing attacks on philosophers. For modern treatments, see: Palanque, *Church in the Christian Roman Empire,* pp. 57–58; Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 111–12; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 70–72; and Odahl, "Use of Apocalyptic Imagery," pp. 11–15.

22 *Origo* 5. 21, and laws in the *Codex Theod* (IV. 8. 6, VII. 1. 1, etc.) placed Constantine at Thessalonica by early 323—cf. the chronology in Barnes, *New Empire,* p. 75. *Origo* 5. 21–22, and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 21, recorded the Sarmatian raids of 323, and Constantine's victories over them; as do the SARMATIA DEVICTA coins issued from the London, Lyons, Trier, Arles, and Sirmium mints of Crispus and Constantine (but not those of Licinius) at this time—cf. Barnes, "The Victories of Constantine," pp. 150–54, and Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, *passim*. *Origo* 5. 21–22 reported how this became a *casus belli:* "Sed hoc Licinius contra fidem factum questus est, quod partes suae ab alio fuerint vindicatae. Deinde cum variasset inter supplicantia et superba mandata, iram Constantini merito excitavit." *Codex Theod* XVI. 2. 5 saved the law punishing officials who forced Christians to sacrifice. Euseb., *Hist Eccl* X. 8, and *Vita Const* II. 1–5, reflects some of the religious propaganda of the pre-war period. For modern commentary on the prelude to this civil war, consult: MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 132–35; Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 52–59; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 73–76; and Grant, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 44–45.

23 Nazarius, *Paneg* X (IV). 3. 5, 17. 2, and 36 and 37, praised the victory of Crispus over the Franci in 319, while Publilius Optatianus Porfyrius, *Carmina* 8. 33, and 10. 24, lauded his victory over the Alamanni in 323. For the BEATA TRANQUILLITAS coins of Crispus, consult: Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, pp. 110–15 (London), pp. 131–34 (Lyons), and pp. 190–201 (Trier); and Odahl, "Christian Symbolism in Military Motifs," p. 68. At the Sirmium mint, Constantine issued bronze coins in early 324 celebrating his recent victory over the Sarmatians (SARMATIA DEVICTA) and Crispus' recent victory over the Alamanni (ALAMANNIA DEVICTA); and gold coins for the arrival of his son at Sirmium and his appointment as Consul for the third time (FELIX PROCESSUS COS III)—recorded in Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, pp. 473–76; cf. Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 75 and 83, for the evidence on the activities of Constantine and Crispus in 323–24.

24 Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 22. 1–2, recorded the strategy of Constantine, naming Thessalonica as the military base and naval harbor for the campaign, and providing the numbers of soldiers and ships; *Origo* 5. 23 identified Crispus as the naval commander for his father; while Euseb., *Hist Eccl* X. 9, confirmed the role of Crispus.

25 Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 22 and 23, reported on the strategy of Licinius, and listed the numbers of his land troops at Hadrianople and naval forces in the Hellespont; *Origo* 5. 23–26 confirmed the positions of his forces, but misspelled the name of the naval commander as Amandus. Because of the importance and finality of this second civil war between Constantine and Licinius, most modern scholars have given credence to the numbers of Zosimus, as seen in Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 113–15; MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 134–38; and Grant, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 45–48.

26 Euseb., *Vita Const* II. 3–12, provided the most data on the religious aspects of the war of 324, including the before battle religious comments of Licinius reported to him by soldiers who had heard them; but Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 7 and 8, offered a few details as well. Modern scholars recognizing the "crusade" aspect of the war include: Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 112–

13; MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 135–36; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 72–76; and Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 129–37.

27 *Origo* 5. 24–25, and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 22. 3–7, recorded the military details, with the account quoted in the text from *Origo* 5. 24 reading:

> Licinius vero circa Hadrianopolim maximo exercitu latera ardui montis impleverat. Illuc toto agmine Constantinus inflexit. Cum bellum terra marique traheretur, quamvis per arduum suis nitentibus, at tamen disciplina militari et felicitate Constantinus Licini confusum et sine ordine agentem vicit exercitum, leviter femore sauciatus.

Euseb., *Vita Const* II. 6–17, and Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 4 and 7, reported on the religious aspects of the battle. The brief accounts given in Jones, *Constantine,* p. 114, in MacMullen, *Constantine,* p. 137, and in Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 76; and the utterly incorrect version given in Grant, *Constantine the Great,* p. 46, reveal that most modern Constantinian scholars not only have failed to understand the strategy of Constantine, but also have failed to reconnoiter the site of the battle.

28 *Origo* 5. 25–27, and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 23–25, again recorded the fullest military details of the siege at Byzantium and the battles in the Hellespont, with *Origo* 5. 26 saying that "Crispus vero cum classe Constantini Callipolim pervenit; ibi bello maritimo sic Amandum [sic] vicit, ut vix per eos qui in litore remanserant vivus Amandus refugeret. Classis vero Licini vel oppressa vel capta est." Eusebius, in his *Hist Eccl* X. 9, also credited Crispus with helping his father win the east; but the tragic death of Cripus in 326, forced Eusebius to leave Crispus out of the civil war account in his *Vita Constantini.* Vict., *Caes* 41. 9, and Zos., *Hist Eccl* II. 25, recorded the elevation of Martinianus to imperial power; and Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, p. 608 (Nicomedia), and p. 645 (Cyzicus), confirms this with extant coins. For modern accounts, consult: Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 114–15; MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 137–38; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 76; and Grant, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 46–47.

29 *Origo* 5. 27–29, Euseb., *Vita Const* II. 12–18, and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 26–28, provided the most details for the Battle of Chrysopolis and its aftermath; Vict., *Caes* 41. 7–9, Eutrop., *Brev* X. 6, Vict., *Epitome* 41. 5–8, Oros., *Hist* VII. 28. 18–21, Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 4, and Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 7, just offered short summary accounts of the second civil war between Constantine and Licinius. Eusebius, the *Origo,* Orosius, and Socrates all felt that Constantine had to put Licinius to death for valid reasons of state; Zosimus, however criticized Constantine for breaking his oath to his sister. A few modern historians have unfortunately accepted the anti-Constantinian propaganda of Zosimus. In truth, Licinius had never been a reliable ally, and, as shown above, had broken every agreement he had made with his brother-in-law. The army, which had fought two civil wars against Licinius, probably wanted him out of the way, and Constantine saw the wisdom of this. His sister Constantia does not seem to have protested, and, in fact, retained an honored position at court, and remained close to her brother until her death a half-dozen years later. Grünewald, *Constantinus Maximus Augustus,* pp. 113–32, lists the epigraphic evidence for the uneasy relationship between Constantine and Licinius during the years 316 to 324 covered in the first half of this chapter. For some modern treatments of the Battle of Chrysopolis and its aftermath, see: Edwin Pears, "The Campaign against Paganism, A.D. 324," *The English Historical Review,* vol. 93 (January, 1909), pp. 1–17; Jones, *Constantine,* p. 115;

MacMullen, *Constantine,* p. 138; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 76–77; and Grant, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 47–50.

30 Euseb., *Vita Const* II. 19.

31 Euseb., *Vita Const* II. 19 mentioned the addition of the title VICTOR to the titulature of Constantine, and in II. 24, 46, and 48 included letters containing the title; cf. Grünewald, *Constantinus Maximus Augustus,* pp. 134–44, for epigraphic examples. The titles AUGUSTA for Helena and MAXIMA AUGUSTA for Fausta appeared on the coins of the period as recorded in Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, Nicomedia, pp. 611ff., and other mints, *passim*. Vict., *Caes* 41. 10, mentioned that Constantine and his sons now ruled the empire, and recorded the promotion of Constantius II to Caesar at this time; and the coins, Bruun, ibid., listed the Augustan title of Constantine and the Caesarian titles of his sons. *Origo* 6. 30 placed the rebuilding and renaming of Byzantium into Constantinople in the years shortly after the victory over Licinius ("ob insignis victoriae memoriam"). On this material, cf. Barnes, *New Empire,* p. 76, and *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 212; and for a description of Constantinople in detail, see Ch. IX below.

32 *Vita Const* II. 24–42. Parts of chapters 26 and 29, and all of 27 and 28 from this imperial letter have survived independently of Eusebius on an ancient page of papyrus owned by the British Library (*P.Lond.* 878)—printed in Jones and Skeat, "Notes on the Genuineness of the Constantinian Documents in Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*" pp. 196–200 (*vide* Ch. 1, note 4 above).

33 Euseb., *Vita Const* II. 24–29 (some words italicized for emphasis by the author): Constantine's review of the recent past in these chapters is remarkably similar to that of Lactantius in *De Mortibus Persecutorum*. The emperor's growing conviction that he was the chosen instrument of divine will and had a "special service" to perform as "the servant of God" "ὁ θεράπων τοῦ θεοῦ" in the Greek of Eusebius) was stated explicitly and publicly herein as well. On these topics, see: Baynes, *Constantine the Great and the Christian Church,* pp. 14–16; Alföldi, *Conversion of Constantine,* pp. 82–85; Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 61–67; and Odahl, "Constantine's Epistle to the Bishops at the Council of Arles," pp. 279–81, and 285, and "God and Constantine," pp. 336–41.

34 Euseb., *Vita Const* II. 30–41; cf. the more general provisions of the "Edict of Milan" in Ch. V above.

35 Euseb., *Vita Const* II. 42: notice again the emphasis on the special role that Constantine was convinced he was playing as an agent of God.

36 Euseb., *Vita Const* II. 44; cf. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 210.

37 Euseb., *Vita Const* II. 45 described the order to build churches, and II. 46 recorded the letter to Eusebius. The apocalyptic fervor with which Constantine had waged the recent crusade against Licinius was reflected in this letter where he equated his defeated enemy ("that dragon"="δράκων ἐκεῖνος") with "the great dragon, the primeval serpent, known as the devil or Satan, who had led all the world astray" in Rv 12 and 13. For the apocalyptic imagery in the literature and art of this period, see: Stauffer, *Christ and the Caesars,* pp. 272–75; Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 58–67; MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 136–37; and Odahl, "The Use of Apocalyptic Imagery in Constantine's Christian Propaganda," pp. 9–19.

38 Eusebius reported on the provisions of the law against pagan rituals in *Vita Const* II. 45; the emperor's sons Constans and Constantius II referred back to a law of their father in their law of 341 outlawing sacrifices in *Codex Theod* XVI. 10. 2; and Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 8, and Theodoret, *Hist Eccl* I. 2, repeated the Eusebian claim that pagan rites were prohibited after the civil war. Some modern scholars, such as H.A.Drake, in a review of Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* in *AJP,* vol. 103 (1982), pp. 462–66, R.M.Errington, in "Constantine and the Pagans," *GRBS,* vol. 29, 3 (1988), pp. 309–18, and T.G.Elliott, in *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 135–38, have doubted the claim of Eusebius; however, Barnes, in

Constantine and Eusebius, pp. 210–12, and in "Constantine's Prohibition of Pagan Sacrifice," *AJP,* vol. 105 (1984), pp. 69–72, and Scott Bradbury, in "Constantine and the Problem of Anti-pagan Legislation in the Fourth Century," *CP,* vol. 89 (1994), pp. 120–39, have defended the account in Eusebius, and seem to have better sources and stronger reason on their side.

39 *Vita Const* II. 48–60; see again Millar, *Emperor in the Roman World,* pp. 577–84, on how imperial *epistulae* in the fourth century came to play the role that imperial *edicta* did in earlier Roman times; and Corcoran, *Empire of the Tetrarchs,* pp. 315–16, for the post-war letters of Constantine.

40 *Vita Const* II. 48–54: the phrasing in chapter 54 ("the perpetrators of this dreadful guilt are now no more,…and have left neither name nor race behind") indicates that Licinius and his son were by then dead.

41 *Vita Const* II. 55–56 (some phrases italicized for emphasis by the author): Constantine again referred to himself as the "servant" of the Christian Divinity; and explicitly avowed his faith in the talismanic symbols of the Christian religion ἡ σφραγίς and τό σύνθημα—the Eusebian Greek equivalents for the Lactantian Latin *caeleste signum Dei*), and the divine power he received from them in overcoming his foes. A mystical fidelity toward the Christian God and a missionary zealotry to promote the Catholic Church in the empire were clearly evident in these passages; but so too were a realistic attitude toward the imperial populace and a political pragmatism to maintain order in the state.

42 *Vita Const* II. 57–60. Philosophical reflections, historical analysis, profound faith, and pragmatic politics were all used in this heartfelt epistle from Constantine to his subjects. His studies in the Bible and Christian apologia, his experiences as a general and an emperor, and his personal beliefs and public obligations produced a policy which strongly promoted Christianity and reluctantly tolerated paganism during the last twelve years of his reign from 325 to 337.

43 Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 61–67, read this edict as a pronouncement from Constantine that his subjects "should follow him on the way of the new era [and] should renounce the old error and turn to the truth"; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 210–12, emphasized the way "Constantine uses harsh language throughout [and] continually denounces paganism"; may have allowed the pagans "to worship their traditional gods only in the Christian sense" thereafter; and that "Christianity was now the established religion of the Roman Empire"; Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops,* pp. 244–45, has recently interpreted it as a manifesto for "a policy of peace and unity" between Christians and pagans, which "renounced the use of coercion to compel belief." Unfortunately, Drake's analysis overlooked the major thrust of the letter which was the ardent defense of the truths of Christianity against the falsehoods of paganism—with toleration given to the pagans only out of political necessity, and because of "the rebellious spirit of those wicked errors…obstinately fixed in the minds of some." Drake has long overemphasized the dichotomy between the private belief and public policy of Constantine, and deemphasized his massive programs of patronage and propaganda in support of Christianity.

44 Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, p. 685, # 48: an Antioch mint gold solidus with imagery and inscription celebrating the "arrival" of the emperor (ADVENTUS AUGUSTI N) indicates that Constantine reached Antioch in the winter of 324–25; in his "Epistle to Alexander the Bishop and Arius the Presbyter," in Euseb., *Vita Const* II. 72, the emperor explained that he turned back from his trip so that he would not have to see the conflict disturbing the Church in Alexandria; cf. Barnes, *New Empire,* p. 76, for the evidence on the itineraries of Constantine, and *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 212, for the historical context of the Arian Controversy.

45 For the development of Trinitarian theories in the early Church before the Arian Conflict, see: Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines,* pp. 83–162; and for the Latin texts of Tertullian and

Lactantius on this topic, cf. Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 42–47, and 67–71. Among the ancient sources for the origins of Arianism, Euseb., in *Vita Const* II. 61 offered only a short and ambiguous introduction to the "most serious disturbance which had invaded the peace of the Church"; Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 7, provided a much more detailed narrative of its beginnings and spread through the eastern church; Athanasius, in *Orationes contra Arianos* I. 5–6, and *De Synodis* 15, quoted and paraphrased the *Thalia;* while Phil., *Hist Eccl* II. 2–3, mentioned the "songs" and some of the "absurd errors" of Arius; Soc., in *Hist Eccl* I. 5–6, and Theod., in *Hist Eccl* I. 1–5, offered poorly constructed and chronologically incorrect narratives, but preserved key documents, such as the circular "Epistle of Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria," from 319 quoted in the text above (Soc.), and the "Letter of Arius to Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia," from 318, the "Letter of Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia, to Paulinus, Bishop of Tyre," and the "Epistle of Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, to Alexander, Bishop of Thessalonica," both between 321 and 324 (Theod.); and Athan., in *De Syn* 16 and 17, included the letter of Arius to Alexander after the Synod of Bithynia (320), and the "Epistle of Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, to Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria," after the Council in Palestine (321). Among modern works useful on this topic are H.-I.Marrou, "L'arianisme comme phénomène alexandrin," *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (1973), pp. 533–42; and Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity,* pp. 268–77, for the physical and social setting of the conflict; W.Telfer, "When Did the Arian Controversy Begin?" *JTS,* vol. 47 (1946), pp. 129–42, and "St. Peter of Alexandria and Arius," *Analecta Bollandiana,* vol. 67 (1949), pp. 117–30; T.E.Pollard, "The Origins of Arianism," *JTS,* n.s., vol. 9 (1958), pp. 103–111; G.C.Stead, "The Platonism of Arius," *JTS,* n.s., vol. 15 (1964), pp. 16–31; and Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition* (London, 1987; 2nd ed., Grand Rapids, MI, 2001), pp. 29–66, for Arius and the origins of the conflict; Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines,* pp. 223–31, and R.P.C.Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God* (Edinburgh, 1988), pp. 3–145, for classic works on Christian theology and the Arian conflict, which quote, date, and elucidate the key documents; and recently, Richard E.Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God: The Epic Fight over Christ's Divinity in the Last Days of Rome* (New York, 1999), pp. 48–61, provides a readable account of the origins of the controversy. Among Constantinian scholars, Jones, in *Constantine,* pp. 117–122, provides a useful narrative and quotes many of the documents; Barnes, in *Athanasius and Constantius,* pp. 10–16, posits that the young deacon Athanasius helped Bishop Alexander in his opposition to Arius and in the writing of his circular letter against him; and Elliott, in *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 141–62, offers a useful narrative of the origins of the conflict, the modifications in the teachings of Arius, and the events between 318 and 324.

46 "Constantine's Epistle to Alexander the Bishop, and Arius the Presbyter" is quoted in full in Euseb., *Vita Const* II. 64–72, and in part in Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 7. Jones, when judging the content of this letter in *Constantine,* pp. 122–24, underestimated the mental acuity and theological knowledge of Constantine in saying that "he could not understand the metaphysical subtleties on which the dispute centered." The studies of the emperor in the Bible and in Lactantian works, and his religious discussions with Ossius and other clergymen, had equipped him to understand the issues. Also, Bishop Alexander had written his longest critique of Arianism and defense of his theology in a letter he sent to Bishop Alexander of Thessalonica (*ca.* 324) when Constantine was there preparing for the "holy war" to liberate Christians from Licinius (recorded in Theod., *Hist Eccl* I. 3). Constantine probably had a chance to read it, and may have got his warning on the limited capacity of the human mind to understand subjects so sublime from the Alexandrian Bishop's letter. Elliott, in *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 183–86, has gone to the opposite extreme of Jones, and labels the pose of Constantine "as an ignorant neutral" in his letter to be "fraudulent." He is correct in his assessment of the emperor's knowledge of Christian theology and the issues in the Arian conflict, but too harsh in his judgment of the content of the epistle to Alexandria. Barnes, in *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 213, is closer to the truth in stating: "Constantine

believed that all people should be Christian, but that Christians might legitimately hold divergent opinions on theological questions and that sensible Christians could disagree about doctrine in a spirit of brotherly love." In fact, the imperial epistle focused upon the love ethic—not the theological doctrine—of Christianity, and urged Alexander and Arius to reunite in Christian love so that pagans might not have an excuse to ridicule Christians, and so that Christianity might more easily be accepted as the established religion of the empire.

The mission of Ossius to take the imperial epistle to Alexandria was recorded by Euseb., *Vita Const* II. 63 and 73; Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 7 and 8; Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 16 and 17; and Theod., *Hist Eccl* I. 6; but only Athan., *Apologia contra Arianos* 74 and 76, contained material on the Synod held by Ossius in Alexandria. The above listed sources did not record the Synod at Antioch; but three Syriac manuscripts, found respectively by E.Schwartz in 1905, F.Nau in 1909, and H.Chadwick in 1958, preserved the "Epistle of Ossius to Bishop Alexander of Byzantium," containing an account of the actions taken and the statement of faith composed by the bishops at the Synod of Antioch (*ca.* March 325). For the details about the discovery and attribution of the Syrian manuscripts, see: Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine of God,* pp. 146–51; and for English translations of the text, see: J.N.D.Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds,* 3rd ed. (New York, 1972), pp. 209–10; and Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 165–68. For helpful modern accounts of the mission of Ossius to Alexandria and his work at the Synod of Antioch, consult: De Clercq, *Ossius of Cordova,* pp. 195–217; H.Chadwick, "Ossius of Cordova and the Presidency of the Council of Antioch, 325," *JTS,* n.s., vol. 9 (1958), pp. 292–304; Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 123–27; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 212–14; Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine of God,* pp. 137–38, and 146–51; Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 163–87; Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops,* pp. 250–51; and Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God,* pp. 48–67.

47 Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 5–6, Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 8, Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 16–17, and Theod., *Hist Eccl* I. 6, all credit Constantine with calling the Council of Nicaea; H.-G.Opitz, *Athanasius' Werke 3.1: Urkunden zur Geschichte des arianischen Streites* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1934), # 20, gives the Syriac text with a Greek translation by E.Schwartz, while J.Stevenson, *A New Eusebius* (London, 1975), p. 358, offers an English translation of the invitations sent out by Constantine changing the venue to Nicaea. Most modern historians believe that Constantine himself decided to expand the scope and alter the location of the "great and holy council"—e.g., Jones, *Constantine,* p. 127; MacMullen, *Constantine,* p. 170; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 214; Hanson, *Search for the Doctrine of God,* pp. 152–54; Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* p. 186; Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God,* pp. 68–69; and Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops,* pp. 251–52 (where he incorrectly characterizes Nicaea as a "coastal city," when it is, in fact, a mountain lakeside resort hours away from the coast). For Nicaea/Iznik, see: Semavi Eyice, *The History and the Monuments of Iznik (Nicaea)*

(Istanbul, 1991); and Clive Foss, *Nicaea: A Byzantine Capital and Its Praises* (Brookline, MA, 1996).

48 Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 6–9; Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 8 and 13; Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 17; Theod., *Hist Eccl* I. 6; and Phil., *Hist Eccl* I. 7, all provided details concerning the preparations for the council and the names and provenances of the important bishops attending it. They made various estimates of from 250 to 318 bishops in attendance (the latter becoming the canonical number). Constantine, who proffered gifts to each participant, confirmed that "more than three hundred bishops" had attended the council in his "Epistle to the Catholic Church of the Alexandrians"—in Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 9. On these issues, consult: Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine of God,* pp. 155–57; Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God,* pp. 72–76; and Henry Chadwick, "The Origin of the Title 'Oecumenical Council'," *JTS,* n.s. vol. 24 (1973), pp. 132–35.

49 An official account of the proceedings of the Council of Nicaea has not survived, but enough key pieces of evidence are extant to reconstruct a general survey of its sessions and a specific rendering of its actions.

The chapter heading and the seating arrangement in Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 11 seem to indicate that the bishop who gave the address of welcome was Eusebius of Nicomedia—so Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 215; and Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* p. 206. The fullest versions of the address of Constantine to the council were recorded in Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 12, and Gelasius, *Hist Eccl* II. 7; with summaries and quotations from it also preserved in Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 8; Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 19; and Theod., *Hist Eccl* I. 6. Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God,* pp. 70–77, stresses how the setting and the procedure of the council aided Constantine in gaining consensus from its participants.

A fragment of Eustathius, preserved in Theod., *Hist Eccl* I. 7, Eusebius' "Epistle to the Church at Caesarea," preserved in Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 8, and in Theod., *Hist Eccl* I. 11, and material in Athan., *Ep de Decretis* 3, and 19–20, and *Epistola ad Afros* 5–6, recorded details of the theological debates at the council, with Eusebius crediting Constantine with the homoousian term, and offering acceptable interpretations of it. Euseb., in *Vita Const* III. 13, emphasized the role of the emperor in moderating the theological debates; and Soc., in *Hist Eccl* I. 8, recorded the "Nicene Creed" adopted at the council. On the theological debates and the creed promugated at Nicaea, consult: H.Kraft, "Homoousios," *ZKG,* vol. 66 (1954/55), pp. 1–24; Pier Franco Beatrice, 'The Word 'Homoousios' from Hellenism to Christianity," CH, vol. 71, 2 (2002), pp. 243–72; De Clercq, *Ossius,* pp. 228–82; G.C.Stead, "'Eusebius' and the Council of Nicaea," *JTS,* n.s., vol. 24 (1973), pp. 85–100; Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds,* pp. 211–30; Williams, *Arius,* pp. 67–70; Hanson, *Search for the*

Christian Doctrine of God, pp. 157–72; Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 132–38; Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 195–211; and Klaus M.Girardet, "Die Teilnahme Kaiser Konstantins am Konzil von Nicaea (325) in byzantinischen Quellen," *AHC,* vol. 33 (2001—but issued in 2003), pp. 241–84. Constantine's negative attitude to the Jews, and his desire for a common day for the Easter celebration are found in his "Epistle to the Churches," preserved in Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 17–20, Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 9, and Theod., *Hist Eccl* I. 9. On this, see: Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 139–40; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 217; Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* p. 211; and James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews, A History* (Boston, 2001).

Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 13–22, Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 8–13, Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 20–24, Theod., *Hist Eccl* I. 6–12, Oros., *Hist* VII. 28. 23–26, and Phil., *Hist Eccl* I. 7–10, preserved other pieces of evidence on the actions of the council, and on the epistles sent out afterwards. The canons of the council can be found in C.J. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles,* vol. I, 1 (Paris, 1907), pp. 528–620, with an English tr. by J.Stevenson, in *A New Eusebius,* pp. 358–72. For useful commentary on the canons, consult: Henry Chadwick, "Faith and Order at the Council of Nicaea: A Note on the Background of the Sixth Canon," *HTR,* vol. 53 (1960), pp. 171–95; Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 140–43; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 217–19; and Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God,* pp. 84–88. Drake, in *Constantine and the Bishops,* pp. 250–58, stresses how "Constantine at Nicaea was at the top of his form."

50 Euseb., in *Vita Const* III. 3, described the pierced dragon imagery on the palace tableau, and Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, p. 572, # 19, lists the surviving coin motif. The era in which the final struggle between Licinius and Constantine, and the conflict between the Arians and the Orthodox were waged bristled with apocalyptic fervor. Constantine felt that both Licinius and Arius were agents of Satan—"the great dragon, the primeval serpent" of Rv 12 and 13—and clearly expressed that sentiment in his contemporary letters: the "Epistle to Eusebius," in *Vita Const* II. 46; the "Epistle to the Churches," in Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 20; and the "Epistle to the Catholic Church of the Alexandrians," in Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 9. Eusebius reflected this apocalyptic spirit as well in his narrative of the era in the *Vita Const* I. 49–III. 20. For the literary and artistic uses of apocalyptic dragon/serpent imagery in this period, see: Stauffer, *Christ and the Caesars,* pp. 272–75; MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 136–37; Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 58–67; Odahl, "The Use of Apocalyptic Imagery in Constantine's Christian Propaganda," pp. 9–19; and Chesnut, *The First Christian Histories,* pp. 164–74.

Notes to Chapter VIII

1 Eusebius in his *Vita Constantini,* the author of the *Origo Constantini,* and Socrates and Theodoret in their *Church Histories,* left a veil of silence over the dynastic tragedy so as not to damage the reputation of their hero. The early pagan epitomists and Orosius briefly mentioned the family tragedy; while the writers most hostile to Constantine—the epitomist of Victor, Philostorgius, and Zosimus—played it up the most. Sozomenus tried to refute some of the incorrect material from the latter tradition. On the other hand, Eusebius, followed by the Church historians, wrote at length about the pilgrimage of Helena. Their accounts, combined with ancient pilgrim narratives, and modern archaeological investigations, help one visualize the old Constantinian churches of Jerusalem and Palestine. Many modern biographers of Constantine—including Jones, *Constantine;* MacMullen, *Constantine;* Dörries, *Constantine the Great;* and Grant, *Constantine the Great*—lost their way topically and chronologically in the last dozen years of Constantine's reign, and treated the dynastic tragedy and Helena's pilgrimage out of order. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* and Pohlsander, *The Emperor Constantine,* are exceptions to this confusion, and placed this material properly between the Council of Nicaea and the dedication of Constantinople. Consult Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 76–78, for a chronology of the emperor's residences and journeys between 325–30.

2 Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 15–16, and 21; and Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 25. Cf. Barnes, *New Empire,* p. 76, and also *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 219.

3 Barnes, *New Empire,* p. 76, lists the evidence for the emperor's "residences and journeys" in and around the cities of Nicomedia and Byzantium (Constantinople) at this time. The exile of Eusebius and Theognis was reported by Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 21; Phil., *Hist Eccl* I. 10; and Theod., *Hist Eccl* I. 19 and 20, with the "Epistle of the Emperor Constantine against Eusebius and Theognis" in the latter. On this incident, see: Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 226–27; Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine of God,* pp. 172–78; and Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 229–32.

4 *Origo* 6. 30 specifically indicated that Constantine desired Constantinople "to be equal to Rome" ("Romae desideravit aequari"), and described how magnificently he adorned it. Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 48–49, and IV. 58–60, Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 16, and Soz., *Hist Eccl* II. 3, provided more information on the specific structures Constantine was constructing in Constantinople at this time. For more references to the ancient sources and modern scholarship on the building of Constantinople, see Ch. IX below. *Codex Theod* XV. 12. 1=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* p. 110, preserved the constitution against the "cruenta spectacula" of gladiatorial combat, which Tertullian and other Christians had condemned. On these topics, cf. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 53 and 222.

5 *Paneg* VI (VII). 4. 1 had early praised Constantine for practicing temperance, avoiding lust, and adopting the laws of matrimony as a young man; and not a hint of sexual impropriety appeared in later sources. The law of 320 lifting penalties for celibates was recorded in *Codex Theod* VIII. 16. 1, and described by Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 9; the four on sexual violations and marriage and adultery were recorded in *Codex Theod* IX. 24. 1; *Codex Theod* IX. 8. 1; *Codex Justinianus* V. 26 (from a copy posted at Caesarea in June); and *Codex Theod* IX. 7. 2, respectively. Judith Evans Grubbs, "Abduction Marriage in Antiquity: A Law of Constantine (*CTH* 9. 24. 1) and Its Social Context," *JRS,* vol. 79 (1989), pp. 59–83, and *Law and Family in Late Antiquity: The Emperor Constantine's Marriage Legislation* (Oxford, 1995), deals at length with these laws, but I think that she has underestimated the Christian influences behind them. The debate at the Council of Nicaea about the necessity of celibacy for Christian clergy (reported by Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 11, and Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 23), and the exaltation of chastity in the monastic movement (as seen in Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 12) must have influenced the emperor in his strict views on limiting sex to marriage. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 219–20, correctly sees Constantine's "abstract ideal of purity deduced from Christian tenets of asceticism."

6 The background on the marriages, children, and family relations of Constantius and Constantine necessary to understand the fears of Fausta in 326 have been woven into the narrative of Chapters III through VII above.

7 Most of the ancient sources, especially the Christian ones, covered up this unseemly episode. However, three sources hostile to Constantine recorded some important information: Vict., *Epitome* 41. 11, reported that "Constantine…at the suggestion of Fausta his wife, as they reckon, ordered that his son Crispus be killed" ("Constantinus… Fausta coniuge, ut putant, suggerente Crispum filium necari iubet"); Phil., *Hist Eccl* II. 4, related that "Constantine was induced by the fraudulent artifices of his stepmother to put his son Crispus to death"; and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 29. 2, wrote that "Without any consideration for natural law, [Constantine] killed his son Crispus, who as I related before, had been considered worthy of the rank of Caesar, on suspicion of having had intercourse with his stepmother Fausta." (Zonaras, a twelfth-century Byzantine historian with a love of classical Greek literature, in his *Epitome* XIII. 2. 38–41, expanded the story to fit the Phaedra and Hippolytus tragedy in Euripides' fifth-century B.C.play in which the stepmother fell for the stepson, and being rebuffed by him, revenged herself by accusing him of rape to her husband Theseus, who mistakenly put his grown son to death before finding out the truth. This late account went too far as Fausta does not seem to have had any romantic feelings for Crispus.) Two other late antique sources provided useful details in passing: Ammianus Marcellinus, in his *Res Gestae* XIV. 11. 20, mentioned that the death of Crispus took place at Pola; and Sidonius Apollinaris, in his *Epistula* V. 8. 2, recorded that he died from poison. Otto Seeck, in "Die Verwandtenmorde Constantin's des Grossen," *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftlichen Theologie,* vol. 33 (1890), pp. 63–77, pioneered the connection between the morality legislation of Constantine and the charges against Crispus in 326; Barnes, in *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 219–21, and Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God,* pp. 90–92, have followed and expanded upon Seeck's thesis as I have done here. I feel that Patrick Guthrie, in "The Execution of Crispus," *Phoenix,* vol. 20 (1966), pp. 325–31, N.J.E.Austin, in "Constantine and Crispus, A.D. 326," *Acta Classica,* vol. 23 (1980), pp. 131–188, and David Woods, in "On the Death of the Empress Fausta," *Greece and Rome,* vol. 55, 1 (1998), pp. 70–86, have veered too far away from the information in the ancient sources and from our knowledge of the character of the persons involved in their analyses of the death of Crispus. Hans A.Pohlsander, in "Crispus: Brilliant Career and Tragic End," *Historia,* vol. 33 (1984), pp. 79–106, esp. 99ff., has listed all the ancient evidence for the tragedy, and offered sober comments on many of the modern interpretations thereof.

8 Eusebius and most of the pro-Constantinian ancient sources also remained silent on this episode; but Vict., *Epitome* 41. 12, recorded that "Thereafter, when his mother Helena reproached him with excessive grief over her grandson, [Constantine] killed his wife Fausta by having her thrown into hot baths" ("Dehinc uxorem suam Faustam in balneas ardentes coniectam interemit, cum eum mater Helena dolore nimio nepotis increparet"); Phil., *Hist Eccl* II. 4, wrote that Constantine ordered Fausta "to be suffocated in a hot bath"; and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 29. 2, related that:

> And when Constantine's mother, Helena, was saddened by this atrocity and was inconsolable at the young man's death, Constantine, as if to comfort her, applied a remedy worse than the disease: he ordered a bath to be overheated, and shut Fausta up in it until she was dead.

(Zon., *Epitome* XIII. 2. 38–41, followed the ancient authors by stating that "when the emperor later recognized the truth, he punished his wife too because of her licentiousness and the death of his son.

Fausta was placed in an overheated bath and there found a violent end of her life.") Some modern scholars interpreting the tragic death of Fausta, including J.Rougé, in "Fausta, femme de Constantin" criminelle ou victime," *Cahiers d'historique,* vol. 25, 1 (1980), pp. 3–17, and Woods, in "On the Death of Empress Fausta," esp. pp. 77–80, have departed too far from the evidence—the former seeing Fausta more a victim of circumstances (various plots against Constantine) than a criminal; and the latter suggesting her death in a hot bath was an accident while she was trying to induce an abortion. Barnes, in *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 220–21, and Rubenstein, in *When Jesus Became God,* pp. 91–92, have followed the ancient sources more closely; and along with Pohlsander, in *Helena,* pp. 22–23, and *The Emperor Constantine,* pp. 52–54, see Helena involved in the death of Fausta as in the interpretation followed here.

9 Barnes, *New Empire,* p. 77, cites the evidence for the visit of Constantine to Rome from 18 July to 3 August 326 for the Vicennalia; while Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, pp. 326–28, lists the special coins and medallions minted at Rome for the festival. Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 29. 5, reported a military parade, and the *Chronicon Paschale,* year 325, recorded the lavishness of the festivities and the cancellation of taxation during the *"vicennalia* in Rome." Bruun, in *RIC,* vol. VII, *passim,* shows that Crispus and Fausta disappeared from the imperial coinage shortly after their deaths, and never reappeared thereupon. Barnes, in his chronicle of the "Imperial Residences and Journeys" of Constantine in *New Empire,* pp. 77–80, reveals that the emperor left Italy in the autumn of 326 and never returned to the peninsula thereafter.

10 Eunapius of Sardis probably retailed this story in his lost *History from Dexippus* in the late fourth century. Sozomenus knew of it and refuted its false chronology in his *Hist Eccl* I. 5 in the mid-fifth century. Zosimus resurrected and expanded it in his *Hist Nova* II. 29. 3–5 in the late fifth century. On this bogus story, see: F.Paschoud, "Zosime 2, 29 et la version païenne de la conversion de Constantin," *Historia,* vol. 20 (1971), pp. 334–53. De Clercq, in his *Ossius of Cordova,* pp. 282–89, argues that the Aegyptius in Zosimus must be Ossius, who gave his final advice to Constantine and the ladies of the court at this time before returning to his see in Spain in the autumn of 326.

11 *Liber Pont* XXXIIII. 16–20=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 145–46, described the building of the *Basilica Beato Petro Apostolo* by Constantine, and contained the inscription engraved on the shrine cross: "CONSTANTINUS AUGUSTUS ET HELENA AUGUSTA HANC DOMUM REGALEM [AURO EXORNAMUS QUAM] SIMILI FULGORE CORUSCANS AULA CIRCUMDAT." The dedication inscription on the triumphal arch was visible until 1525 when the old *San Pietro* was being torn down as it was being replaced by the Renaissance-Baroque basilica of modern times; the inscription has been preserved in CIL, vol. VI, 1, p. 10, # 6, and Diehl, *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres,* vol. 1, # 1752, and reads: "QUOD DUCE TE MUNDUS SURREXIT IN ASTRA TRIUMPHANS HANC CONSTANTINUS VICTOR TIBI CONDIDIT AULAM." For modern archaeological work relevant to the original Constantinian church, see again: Apollonj Ghetti, *La Tomba e le basiliche de San Pietro al Vaticano;* Toynbee and Ward-Perkins, *Shrine of Saint Peter,* esp. pp. 195–239; Kirschbaum, *Tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul,* pp. 143–55; Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City,* pp. 26–28; and Odahl, "Christian Basilicas of Constantinian Rome," pp. 15–19; and for the Constantinian reburial and modern identification of the apostle's bones, consult: Margherita Guarducci, *Le Reliquie di Pietro*

(Vatican City, 1965), and *Le Reliquie di Pietro: una messa a punto* (Rome, 1967); and John Evangelist Walsh, *The Bones of Saint Peter* (Bungay, Suffolk, United Kingdom, 1984), esp. pp. 109–29. *Liber Pont* XXXIIII. 23= Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 151–53, recorded that Constantine "fecit basilicam sanctae martyris Agnae ex rogatu filiae suae et baptisterium in eodem loco ubi et baptizata est soror eius Constantia cum filia Augusti a Silvestro episcopo." For modern work on the ancient basilica and mausoleum at the Via Nomentana site, see: Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City,* pp. 25–26; Mancinelli, *Catacombs of Rome,* pp. 49–51; and Odahl, "Christian Basilicas of Constantinian Rome," pp. 25–26. And for a detailed survey of ancient references on Constantia, consult: Pohlsander, "Constantia." The dynastic tragedy has been difficult for modern historians to reconstruct because the Christian sources largely covered it up and the pagan authors sensationalized it. The few facts provided by the latter, what is known about the persons involved, related subsequent events, and some common sense have been employed in the reconstruction here.

12 The close relationship which Constantine maintained with his half-sister Constantia through the next few years, and the bond which developed between her and his children seems to indicate that she was helping him raise them. The laws which help trace the eastward journey were: *Codex Theod* XVI. 5. 2 (Spoleto—25 Sept. 326); *Codex Theod* IV. 22. 1 (Milan-23 Oct. 326); *Codex Just* II. 19 (20). 11 (Aquileia-22 Nov. 326); *Codex Just* X. 1. 7 (Sirmium-31 Dec. 326); *Codex Theod* XI. 3. 2 (Thessalonica-27 Feb. 327); *Codex Theod* II. 24. 2 (Constantinople-11 June 327); and *Codex Theod* XII. 5. 1 (Nicomedia-30 July 327). Those of 326 were issued in the names of Constantine and his son Constantius II, who was serving as consul with his father for the year.

13 Eusebius and later fourth- and fifth-century Christian writers waxed eloquent on the pilgrimage of Helena; unfortunately the later writers often tacked unreliable legends onto the history of her journey and activities. On her motives, Barnes, in *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 221, comments that "her generosity was designed to make people forget recent events"; E.D.Hunt, in *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire, A.D. 312–460* (Oxford, 1984), p. 33, asserts that "the palace crisis of 326…was surely just the situation which prompted Helena's journey: acting in concert with Constantine's own building activities in Jerusalem she was, by her prayers at Christendom's most holy places, to reaffirm God's sanction for the new order"; Pohlsander, in *Helena: Empress and Saint,* pp. 84–5, and in *The Emperor Constantine,* pp. 54–5, agrees.

14 Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 41–47. Jules Maurice, *Sainte Hélène* (Paris, 1930), p. 14, and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 221, suggest that Helena set out from Rome and traveled by sea to the east; and Pohlsander, in *Helena: Empress and Saint,* p. 85, note 8, records late traditions about her voyage and a stop in Paros.

15 Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 42 and 45; cf. Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage,* pp. 35–37, and Pohlsander, *Helena: Empress and Saint,* p. 87, for the pious activities of Helena on her pilgrimage.

16 Euseb., in *Vita Const* III. 25–29, reviewed the idol pollution at the site, Constantine's orders to clear the area, and the uncovering of the tomb; and in III. 30–32, recorded the emperor's "Epistle to Macarius." On the history of Jerusalem, the site of Golgotha and the tomb of Christ from the first to fourth centuries, see: Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths* (New York, 1996), pp. 143–93; Anthony Birley, *Hadrian: The Restless Emperor* (New York, 1997) pp. 231–33, and 268–78; Jack Finegan, *The Archeology of the New Testament* (Princeton, NJ, 1969), esp. pp. 109–11, and 163–70; Murphy-O'Connor, *The Holy Land,* pp. 45–57; and Martin Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ* (Phoenix Mill, UK, 1999), pp. 53–73.

17 The ancient literary descriptions of the Holy Sepulchre complex from which the quotations in the text have been taken were: the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* 593–94 =Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* p. 155; Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 33–40; and the *Itinerarium Egeriae* 24–25, and 48–49=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 159–67. Artistic depictions are found on

pilgrim *ampulae,* in the great Santa Pudenziana apse mosaic in Rome, and on the Madaba Map mosaic in Jordan. Useful studies on archaeological work at the site are: Finegan, *Archeology of the New Testament,* pp. 163–72; John Wilkinson, "The Tomb of Christ," *Levant,* vol. 4 (1972), pp. 83–97; Coüasnon, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre,* all; Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage,* pp. 6–14; Pohlsander, *Helena: Empress and Saint,* pp. 88–91; Murphy-O'Connor, *The Holy Land,* pp. 45–57; and Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ,* pp. 65–73.

18 *Itin Burd* 598=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* p. 156, and Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 43, were the best ancient sources for the Nativity Church, with the former noting that Bethlehem was six Roman miles south of Jerusalem and was the site "ubi natus Dominus Iesus Christus; ibi basilica facta est iussu Constantini"; and the latter giving credit to Helena for ordering the construction of the church, and describing the splendid decorations with which she and her son adorned it. For modern work, consult: F.Nau, "Les constructions palestiniennes dues a Sainte Hélène," *Revue de l'orient chrétien,* vol. 10 (1905), pp. 162–88; T.Richmond, "The Church of the Nativity—the Plan of the Constantinian Church," *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine,* vol. 6 (1938), pp. 63–66; Finegan, *Archeology of the New Testament,* pp. 18–25; Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage,* pp. 14–15; Pohlsander, *Helena: Empress and Saint,* pp. 91–93 and Murphy-O'Connor, *The Holy Land,* pp. 198–205.

19 *Itin Burd* 594–95=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 155–56, Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 43, and *Itin Eger* 31 recorded ancient data on the Eleona Basilica of Helena. For modern work, see: Hugues Vincent, "L'Eléona: sanctuaire primitif de l'ascension," *Revue Biblique,* vol. 64 (1957), pp. 48–71; Finegan, *Archeology of the New Testament,* pp. 95–99; Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage,* p. 15; Pohlsander, *Helena: Empress and Saint,* pp. 94–95; and Murphy-O'Connor, *The Holy Land,* pp. 125–26.

20 Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 44–46, called her journey a "circuit…of the eastern provinces," and reported that she had "arrived at the eightieth year of her age" when she "died in the presence of her illustrious son." For her possible visit to Antioch and connection with its intemperate bishop Eustathius, see Ch. IX below.

21 Eutropia was the only attested wife of Maximian, and was clearly the mother of both Maxentius and Fausta. Limited and conflicting evidence does not make it clear whether Theodora (the second wife of Constantius) was her daughter by a possible previous marriage to an Afranius Hannibalianus (consul in 292), or whether Theodora was the daughter of Maximian by a previous marriage to an unknown daughter of Hannibalianus. Yet, most scholars think that Theodora and Fausta were half sisters. On this issue, see: *PLRE,* vol. I, Eutropia 1 (p. 316), and Theodora 1 (p. 895)=Eutropia's daughter; and Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 33–34=Maximian's daughter. In any case, Eutropia was the real blood grandmother of Constantine's children, and at the very least the stepgrandmother of his half-siblings—a close relationship. *Origo* 4. 12 reported: "De cuius [Maxentius] origine, mater eius [Eutropia], cum quaesitum esset, Syro quodam genitum esse confessa." Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 51–53, recorded the findings of Eutropia at Mamre (sometimes spelled Mambre), and the letter of Constantine ordering the building of a church there; cf. *Itin Burd* 599=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* p. 156, and Soz., *Hist Eccl* II. 4, who add some details on the site and the church, and note that it was a terebinth tree rather than an oak tree beside which Abraham dug his well and received his divine visitation. For modern descriptions of the ruins, consult: Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage,* p. 15; and Murphy-O'Connor, *The Holy Land,* pp. 327–28.

22 Drepanum (Turkish Yalova) was the birthplace of Helena, and the burial place of Lucian of Antioch—whose martyrdom she may have witnessed at Nicomedia in 312. See Barnes, *New Empire,* p. 77, and note 130, for the date of 7 January 328; and Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 46, for her age and the circumstances of her passing.

23 Some scholars feel that ambiguous language used by Constantine in his "Epistle to Macarius," and by Eusebius in the *Vita Constantini* and the *De Laudibus Constantini* may be interpreted as referring to the discovery of the cross rather than the cave at Golgotha. However, the first explicit literary reference to the *lignum crucis* only occurred in the

Catecheses of Cyril of Jerusalem, *ca.* 348–50, and he did not deal with its discovery or link it to Helena. References to the cross become more frequent as the fourth century wore on, but it was not until the *De Obitu Theodosii* of Ambrose, and the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Rufinus, *ca.,* 395 and 397, that Helena was given credit for the *inventio crucis*. The stories about her discovery were miraculous, and became ever more fanciful as they were retold in the *Historiae Ecclesiasticae* of Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, and other ancient writers in the fifth century. For a sampling of modern work on this topic (with references to the ancient sources), see: Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage,* pp. 28–49; H.A.Drake, "Eusebius on the True Cross," *JEH,* vol. 36, 1 (1985), pp. 1–22; Stephan Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross Was Found: From Event to Medieval Legend* (Stockholm, 1991); Jan Willem Drijvers, *Helena Augusta: The Mother of Constantine the Great and the Legend of Her Finding the True Cross* (Leiden, 1992); and Pohlsander, *Helena: Empress and Saint,* pp. 101–116, whose view has been accepted here:

> The legend of the *inventio* of the True Cross by Helena…clearly is one which developed by accretion, and the different stages of development can readily be identified…. When all of our sources have been fully exploited and all arguments carefully considered, which elements of the tradition remain? Helena's pilgrimage, the construction of the church subsequently known as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the discovery of the tomb believed to be that of Jesus are incontestable facts. And at some time before the middle of the fourth century…the wood believed to be that of the True Cross had been found. But the more specific time of the precious find remains open to question, and any part of Helena in such find seems quite unlikely.

24 See Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage,* on ancient pilgrimages; Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City,* pp. 40–41, for the Santa Pudenziana mosaic; Finegan, *Archeology of the New Testament,* pp. 169–70, for the Madaba Map; and Theoderich, *Guide to the Holy Land,* tr. by A.Stewart, and ed. R.Musto (New York, 1986), for descriptions of the Holy Land churches by a late twelfth-century pilgrim.

Notes to Chapter IX

1 Eusebius, in the *Vita Constantini,* and his successors Socrates, Sozomenus, Gelasius, and Theodoret in their *Historiae Ecclesiasticae,* preserved many documents and provided much information concerning the theological conflicts and episcopal politics of 327–28. Eusebius, who visited Constantinople several times, and Socrates and Sozomenus, who resided there a century later, have left accounts of the city and its buildings when it was dedicated by Constantine in 330. The *Origo Constantini* and the pagan epitomists, and especially Zosimus in his *Historia Nova,* recorded data on the governmental and military reforms of Constantine, and also provided data on his building program in Constantinople. Epigraphic and legal materials, and modern archaeological work add further information for the years 327–330. Among modern Constantinian biographers, Jones in *Constantine,* pp. 145–54; Barnes in *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 224–30; Elliott in *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 234–52; and Drake in *Constantine and the Bishops,* pp. 258–61, detail the episcopal struggles of this period; and MacMullen in *Constantine,* pp. 141–56; and Pohlsander in *The Emperor Constantine,* describe the foundation of Constantinople. Barnes again, in his *New Empire,* pp. 77–78, offers a chronology of the journeys and residences of Constantine through the years 327–330.

2 Soc., in *Hist Eccl* I. 25. 7, preserved one of the letters of Constantine urging Arius to come to his court for an interview about returning to the Church; and in *Hist Eccl* I. 26. 2, he recorded the "Epistle of Arius and Euzoius" to Constantine quoted in the text. Jones, *Constantine,* p. 147, notes that their "request was couched in terms which were calculated to appeal to the Emperor"; while Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God,* pp. 96–97, sees Constantine "longing for peace both in the Church and in his personal life" because of his grief over the "catastrophe of Crispus and Fausta."

3 The "Epistle of Constantine to Bishop Alexander" was preserved in Gelasius, *Hist Eccl* III. 15. 1; Euseb., in *Vita Const* III. 23, briefly mentioned what is sometimes called the "Second Session of the Council of Nicaea" of 327–28; while the "Letter of Eusebius and Theognis" to the council has been recorded in Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 14. 2, and in Soz., *Hist Eccl* II. 16, with the latter reporting on their restitution to their sees. For these events, see: Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 147–49; Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine of God,* pp. 174–78; and Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 234–38.

4 The ancient sources for the fall of Eustathius and the Council at Antioch were: Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 59–62; Athan., *Hist Arianorum* 4; Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 23–24; Soz., *Hist Eccl* II. 18–19; Phil., *Hist Eccl* II. 7; and Theod., *Hist Eccl* I. 20–21. Modern scholars used to think that these events took place around 330, but it is now known that they occurred a few years earlier—327–28. For relevant modern works, see: R.V.Sellers, *Eustathius of Antioch and His Place in the Early History of Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge, 1928); Henry Chadwick, "The Fall of Eustathius of Antioch," *JTS,* vol. 49 (1948), pp. 27–35; Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 149–51; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 227–29; R.P.C.Hanson, "The Fate of Eustathius of Antioch," *ZKG,* vol. 95 (1984), pp. 171–79; Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine of God,* pp. 209–17; Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 243–52: and Richard W.Burgess, "The Date of the Deposition of Eustathius of Antioch," *JTS,* vol. 51 (2000), pp. 150–60.

5 The westward journey of Constantine can be traced by postings in *Codex Theodosianus*—for which see: Barnes, *New Empire,* p. 77. Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 47, recorded the imperial escort for and royal burial of Helena's body at Rome. *Liber Pont* XXXIIII. 26–27=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* p. 150, described the basilica and mausoleum where Helena was buried. For modern work on these structures, consult: Friedrich Wilhelm Deichmann, and Arnold Tschira, "Das Mausoleum der Kaiserin Helena und die Basilika der heiligen Marcellinus und Petrus an der Via Labicana vor Rom," *Jahrbuch des deutschen archäologischen Instituts,* vol. 72 (1957), pp. 44–110; Alexander, "Studies in Constantinian Church Architecture," pp. 298–99; Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City,* p. 25; Mancinelli, *Catacombs of Rome,* pp. 39–40; and Odahl, "Christian Basilicas of Constantinian Rome," pp. 22–23. And for Helena's burial, and the history of her sarcophagus and relics, see: Pohlsander, *Helena: Empress and Saint,* pp. 149–66.

6 Barnes in *New Empire,* pp. 77–78, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 221–22, and "Victories of Constantine," pp. 151–53, cites the laws in the *Codex Theodosianus* and the victory titles on coins and inscriptions which place the emperor at Trier and indicate a victory over the Germans in 328–29; Bruun, *RIC* vol. VII, p. 213 (#s 516 and 517) lists the contemporary coins minted at Trier for the Caesar in 328–29.

7 Barnes in *New Empire,* p. 78, lists the postings in the *Codex Theodosianus* which place Constantine along the Danube in 329–30. The statement in Eutrop., *Brev* X. 7, "Nam etiam Gothos post civile bellum varie profligavit, pace his ad postremum data, ingentemque apud barbaras gentes memoriae gratiam conlocavit," indicates that Constantine started his Gothic wars "after the civil war"; and an inscription in *ILS* 6091, column III. 5, containing the title GOTHICUS MAXIMUS for the first time, seems to confirm that his initial victory over them was in the year 329. Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, pp. 331–33 (#s 298–309), and pp. 573–75 (#s 29–38), lists the Rome and Constantinople coins celebrating the trans Danubian victories of 329. For these events, see: MacMullen, *Constantine,* p. 146; and Grant, *Constantine the Great,* p. 59.

8 The last part of the statement in *Origo* 2.2: "Igitur Constantinus, natus…in oppido Naisso atque eductus, quod oppidum postea magnifice ornavit" may very well refer to 329–30 when he was touring the Balkans before returning to the Bosporus to dedicate Constantinople.

9 Eutrop., *Brev* X. 9, wrote: "Is successores filios tres reliquit atque unum fratris filium." See Ch. X below for the specific details and the relevant references.

10 Euseb., *Vita Const, passim,* offered hints about some of Constantine's military reforms; the *Notitia Dignitatum* listed many of the new units created by Constantine; and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 32–34, described the creation of the *magistri* commanders and of the field army—but not with full accuracy. For the standard modern work detailing the differences between the military reforms of Diocletian and Constantine, consult: Berchem, *L'armée de Dioclétien et la réforme constantinienne,* esp. pp. 75–118; cf. Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* pp. 97–101; Luttwak, *Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire,* pp. 127–90; Ferrill, *Roman Imperial Grand Strategy,* pp. 45–51; Cameron, *Later Roman Empire,* pp. 33–36, and 53; and Southern and Dixon, *Late Roman Army,* pp. 33–38.

11 Euseb., *Vita Const, passim,* again hinted at many of the administrative reforms of Constantine; while Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 32–34, criticized the reduction in the powers of the praetorian prefects. For modern discussions of the administrative reforms of Constantine, see: Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* vol. I, pp. 101–7; MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 198–99; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 255–58; Cameron, *Later Roman Empire,* pp. 53–55; and Grant, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 82–86. For ancient references on the officials mentioned in the text, see for Philumenus: *PLRE,* vol. I, p. 699; for Flavius Hermogenes: *PLRE.* vol. I, pp. 424–25; for Evagrius: *PLRE,* vol. I, pp. 284–85, and Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 131–32; for Junius Bassus: *PLRE,* vol. I, pp. 154–55, and Barnes, *New Empire,* p. 129; and for Flavius Ablabius: *PLRE,* vol. I, pp. 3–4, and Barnes, *New Empire,* p. 132.

12 The *Codex Theod* is full of Constantinian constitutions tying people to essential professions: e.g., V. 17. 1—coloni; XII. 1. 1—decurions; and XIV. 3. 1—breadmakers. Euseb., *Vita Const* IV. 1–4, offered a positive account of the emperor's taxation policies; while Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 38, gave a negative assessment of the same. For modern accounts on his economic reforms, consult: Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* pp. 107–10; MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 200–203; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 255–58; Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* p. 240; Cameron, *Later Roman Empire,* pp. 53–55; and Grant, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 86–103.

13 The persecution policies and miserable deaths of the pagan tetrarchs were described in Chs. III and IV above, while Constantine's conversion experience and growing sense of Christian mission were chronicled in Chs. V–VIII above. The Eusebian description of Constantine's later religious policy is found in *Vita Const* III. 54.

14 Eusebius described the "prayer pose" coins and their palace portrait prototypes in *Vita Const* IV. 15. It should be noted that Tertullian in *Apol* 30=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* p. 48, had reported that the Christian manner of prayer was to stand with hands outstretched and eyes looking heavenward to God; and that canon 20 of the Council of Nicaea had affirmed this pose as the proper stance for Christian prayer. There would not have been any pagans in the empire by A.D. 330 who would not have known to which Deity the emperor Constantine was praying; modern academics who wish to interpret this pose as an ambiguous Hellenistic motif are utterly wrong. For some excellent examples of the "prayer pose" coinage, see: Siscia mint (326–27)—VIRTUS D N CONSTANTINI AUG, listed in Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, p. 451, # 108=Alfred R.Bellinger, "Roman and Byzantine Medallions in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection," *DOP,* vol. 12 (1958), pp. 132–33, # 7; Nicomedia mint (328–29)—GLORIA CONSTANTINI AUG, listed in Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, p. 624, # 151=Bellinger, "Roman and Byzantine Medallions," p. 134, # 11; with illustrations and detailed analyses in Odahl, "Constantinian Coin Motifs in Ancient Literary Sources," pp. 2–4; and Kellner, "Christuszeichen auf Münzen der Zeit Constantins I," p. 55.

15 See Constantine's "Edict on Religion," in Euseb., *Vita Const* II. 48–60, for his promotion of the truth of Christianity against the errors of paganism; Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 25–53, and 54–58 for the emperor's construction of Christian churches, and despoliation of pagan temples in the east in the decade after the civil war; and Euseb., *Vita Const* II. 44–45, and IV. 23 and 25, for his attempts to forbid pagan sacrifices. Many modern scholars have recognized Constantine's sense of mission to promote Christianity and convert the empire, including Baynes, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 27–28; Alföldi, *Conversion of Constantine,* pp. 32–33, and *passim;* Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 169–81; MacMullen, *Constantine,* p. 238; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 275; and Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* p. 327.

16 The date of 8 November 324 for the initial founding of Constantinople and the marking out *(limitatio)* of its new city wall by Constantine is based on ancient references found in Themistius, *Oratio* 4, Phil., *Hist Eccl* II. 9, and the *Consularia Constantinopolitana, Chronica Minora* I. 232. Euseb., in *Vita Const* III. 48, reported that the emperor purged the city of idolatry. In *Vita Const* III. 54, he recorded that Constantine despoiled pagan shrines and temples for material to adorn his new city; and Jerome, in *Chroninon* 232 (year 330), agreed in writing: "Dedicatur Constantinopolis paene omnium urbium nuditate." *Origo* 6. 30, and Eutrop., *Brev* X. 8, both indicated that the emperor wanted his new capital to equal old Rome. Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 16, and Soz., *Hist Eccl* II. 3 both reported that it was called "New Rome" and "Constantinople" (Constantine's city) from the beginning. *Chronicon Paschale,* year 328, recorded the structures which Constantine was building in the city before its formal dedication. For modern work on the geographic location and pagan background of Byzantium, and the foundation of Constantinople by Constantine, see: R.Janin, *Constantinople byzantine: dévelopement urbain et repertoire topographique,* 2nd ed. (Paris, 1964), pp. 1–31; Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale: Constantinople,* pp. 13–37; Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals,* pp. 41–43; and Joseph Alchermes, "Constantinople and the Empire of New Rome," in Linda Safran, ed., *Heaven on Earth: Art and the Church in Byzantium* (University Park, PA, 1998), pp. 13–18.

17 A special gold medallion was minted at Constantinople for the return of Constantine in the spring of 330, with a diademed bust of the emperor on the obverse, and a depiction of him mounted on his horse on the reverse under the inscription the ADVENTUS AUGUSTI N— listed in Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, p. 576, # 41. Pierre Gilles, in his sixteenth-century *The Antiquities of Constantinople,* tr. by J.Ball, and ed. by R.Musto (New York, 1988), Preface and Book I, offered a detailed account of the topography and climate of Constantinople, and the beautiful views from the eastern tip of its promontory.

18 The ancient sources for the first hill and ceremonial core of Constantinople are: Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 3, and 48–49, IV. 15, and 66–67; *Origo* 6. 30; Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 16, and II. 16; Soz., *Hist Eccl* II. 3; Phil., *Hist Eccl* II. 9; Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 30–31; and the *Chronicon Paschale,* year 328; cf. Pierre Gilles, *Antiquities of Constantinople* II. 1–22. For modern scholarship on this area and its structures, consult: Janin, *Constantinopole byzantine,* pp. 59–62, 106–13, 154–60, and 183–94; Dagron, *Naissance d'une capital: Constantinople,* pp. 32–37; Alexander, "Studies in Constantinian Church Architecture," pp. 318–24; Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals,* pp. 45–55, and *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture,* pp. 68–73; Alchermes, "Constantinople," pp. 16–23; Patrick Balfour Kinross, *Hagia Sophia* (New York, 1972); and R.J.Mainstone, *Hagia Sophia: Architecture, Structure, and Liturgy of Justinian's Great Church* (New York, 1997).

19 Ancient and Byzantine sources which have provided bits of data on the second hill of Constantinople, and the Forum and Column of Constantine include: Soc., *Hist Eccl* II. 17; Phil., *Hist Eccl* II. 17, Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 30; Malalas, *Chronographia* XIII, p. 320; *Chronicon Paschale,* year 328; and Anna Comnena, *Alexiad* XII. 4; cf. Pierre Gilles, *Antiquities of Constantinople* II. 23—III. 4, who offered a detailed description of the area from the Milion up to the Forum of Constantine and what he thought it would have looked like in antiquity. For modern scholarship, see: Janin, *Constantinople byzantine,* pp. 62–64,

and 77–80; Dagron, *Naissance d'une capital: Constantinople,* pp. 37–40; Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals,* pp. 55–67; Leeb, *Konstantin und Christus,* pp. 12–17; Alchermes, "Constantinople," pp. 18–19; and esp. Garth Fowden, "Constantine's Porphyry Column: The Earliest Literary Allusion," *JRS,* vol. 81 (1991), pp. 119–31, wherein he offers detailed analyses of all the key sources on the Column of Constantine, and disproves the late Byzantine legends (8th c. and later) that the bronze statue on it was meant to represent the emperor in the image of the Sun.

20 Soz., *Hist Eccl* II. 3, and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 30–32, and 35–36, described the expansion of the city out to the Wall of Constantine, and the various mansions and dwellings and fountains in the districts up on the third and fourth hills. Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 48–49, mentioned the churches and martyr shrines through the city, and the use of "the good shepherd" and "Daniel with the lions" on "the public fountains" in the city. Euseb., in *Vita Const* IV. 26, quoted the letter of the emperor requesting that he oversee the making of fifty Bibles for the expanding population and new churches in Constantinople. In *Vita Const* IV. 58–60, Eusebius gave a detailed description of *Hagioi Apostoloi,* and the desire of Constantine to be buried therein amidst the symbolic tombs of the Apostles—see Ch. XI for more on this structure and the death and burial of Constantine. Pierre Gilles, in *Antiquities of Constantinople,* I, gave a hill by hill and region by region description of ancient Constantinople, and in III and IV recorded the key structures from the Forum of Constantine out to the fifth-century Theodosian Wall. Janin, in *Constantinople byzantine,* pp. 43ff. lists the fourteen districts of the city, and describes structures located in each; cf. Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals,* pp. 56–62, and *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture,* pp. 69–73; and Alchermes, "Constantinople," pp. 17–26, for other descriptions of the city at the time of its dedication.

21 Euseb., *Vita Const* III. 48, reported that Constantine "dedicated his city to the God of the Martyrs"; the *Chronicon Paschale,* year 330, recorded the 11 May date and the hippodrome ceremony for the dedication; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 222–23, connects that date with St. Mocius; and Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, p. 63, and *passim* through the mint lists for years 330–35, discusses and lists the cross scepter dedication coins, and Odahl, "Constantinian Coin Motifs in Ancient Literary Sources," pp. 10–11, analyses and illustrates them. Grünewald, *Constantinus Maximus Augustus,* pp. 144–50, details the epigraphic evidence for the years 326–30. For modern accounts and views about the dedication of Constantinople, see: D.Lathoud, "La consecration et la dédicace de Constantinople," *Échos d'Orient,* vol. 23 (1924), pp. 289–314, and vol. 24 (1925), pp. 180–201; A.Frolow, "La dédicace de Constantinople dans la tradition byzantine," *Revue de l'histoire des religions,* vol. 127 (1944), pp. 61–127; Andrew Alföldi, "On the Foundation of Constantinople: A Few Notes," *JRS,* vol. 37 (1947), pp. 10–16; and *Conversion of Constantine,* pp. 97–116; Janin, *Constantinople byzantine,* pp. 21–26; Dagron, *Naissance d'une capital: Constantinople,* pp. 32–47; MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 150–56; Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 68–76; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 222–23; Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals,* pp. 61–67; and Pohlsander, *The Emperor Constantine,* pp. 59–67—among whom Alföldi, Dörries, and Barnes seem to have most accurately interpreted the actions of Constantine.

Notes to Chapter X

1 Eusebius, in the *Vita Constantini,* reported on all the important actions of Constantine for the years 330–36, including his pro-Christian and anti-pagan policies, his involvements in episcopal politics, his Danube wars and his succession plans. Other ecclesiastical writers, such as Athanasius, Socrates, Sozomenus and Theodoret, added material and documents on the episcopal squabbles and Church councils of the era. The *Origo Constantini,* and the

secular epitomists commented on the wars and succession plans of Constantine through these years. Legal, numismatic, epigraphic, and archaeological data also provide relevant material for the later years of the emperor's reign. Though many modern biographers of Constantine have not maintained a strict chronological framework for these later years, Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 151–94; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 230–55; and Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 271–324, deal with most of the important topics well. Again, see: Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 78–80, for a chart and references concerning the residences and journeys of Constantine between 330–36.

2 Barnes, *New Empire,* pp. 78–80, cites the postings in the *Codex Theodosianus,* the *Codex Justinianus,* and some of the numismatic and literary evidence, placing the emperor in Constantinople at these times.

3 Euseb., in *Vita Const* IV. 17, 22, and 29 (quoted in the text), reported on the prayers, biblical studies, and religious discourses of Constantine in the palace; in IV. 35, he quoted a letter from the emperor thanking him for his treatise on Easter; and in IV. 32, he mentioned Constantine's *Oratio ad Coetum Sanctorum,* which he attached to the end of the *Vita Constantini*—it should be noted that the order and subject matter of the imperial discourses seem to have been modeled on the *Divinae Institutiones* of Lactantius. Barnes, in *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 266–67, argues that Eusebius can be attested to have been in the presence of Constantine on only four occasions (summer of 325, December of 327, October of 335, and summer of 336), and that they were all largely formal; however, Drake, in "What Eusebius Knew: The Genesis of the *Vita Constantini*" pp. 20–38, makes a credible case that Eusebius also spent several months in the palace from the summer of 336 to spring of 337 gathering data for his biography, and thus was able to offer eyewitness testimony on the habits of the emperor at this time.

4 Euseb., in *Vita Const* I. 44, characterized Constantine as a "general bishop *(koinos episkopos)* constituted by God"; and in IV. 24, he recorded the statement of the emperor that he had been appointed by God "ἐπίσκοπος . . . τῶν ἐκτός." For modern analyses of these phrases, consult: W.Seston, "Constantine as a 'Bishop'," *JRS,* vol. 37 (1947), pp. 127–131; Jones, *Constantine,* p. 169; J.Straub, "Constantine as ΚΟΙΝΟΣ ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ," *DOP,* No. 21 (1967), pp. 37–55; Daniel de Decker, and Ginette Dupuis-Masay, "L''épiscopat' de l'empereur Constantin," *Byzantion,* vol. 50, (1980), pp. 118–57.

5 Euseb., in *Vita Const* IV. 15, described the coin motif and its palace prototypes, and in II. 28, quoted the passage in the "Edict of Restitution" in which the emperor testified that the God of the Christians was the only true Deity. Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C., and the British Museum in London, England, have excellent specimens of these "prayer-pose" coins and medallions. For these, see: Bellinger, "Roman and Byzantine Medallions in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection," pp. 132–34, #s 7–11; A.R.Bellinger, P.Bruun, J.P.C.Kent, and C.H.V.Sutherland, "Late Roman Gold and Silver Coins at Dumbarton Oaks: Diocletian to Eugenius," *DOP,* vol. 18 (1964), esp. pp. 179–84, and #s 45–62; Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, esp. the mints of Constantinople and Nicomedia between 324–37; Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 169–75, and Pl. 45, #s 674 and 676; and Odahl, "Constantinian Coin Motifs in Ancient Literary Sources," pp. 2–4, and Figs. 1 and 2.

6 *Codex Theod* II. 8. 1=Odahl, *Early Christian Latin,* pp. 107–08, preserved the original law; while Euseb., *Vita Const* IV. 18–20, described its application in the palace and the camps. For modern commentary, consult: Gaudemet, "La legislation religieuse de Constantin," pp. 43–48; and Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 118–29.

7 Euseb., in *Vita Const* I. 42, mentioned the emperor's church-building in the west, in III. 25–58, and IV. 58–60, his church-building in the east, and in II. 46, preserved his letter admonishing bishops to construct churches in their towns with aid from the prefects and governors of their regions. Good summaries of church building under Constantine are provided by Krautheimer, "The Constantinian Basilica," pp. 115–40; Alexander, "Studies in

Constantinian Church Architecture," (1971), pp. 281–330, and (1973), pp. 33–44; and Milburn, *Early Christian Art and Architecture,* pp. 94–105; and see Chapters VI, VIII, and IX above for detailed descriptions of the Constantinian churches of Rome, Jerusalem, and Constantinople respectively.

8 Euseb., *Vita Const* II. 44, recorded the promotion of Christians to high governmental positions. Barnes, in "The Religious Affiliation of Consuls and Prefects, 317–61," in Ch. 7 of *From Eusebius to Augustine* (Brookfield, VT, 1994), shows that there was a higher proportion of Christians among the consuls and prefects appointed by Constantine and his sons than was previously suspected; and David Woods, in "Eusebius on Some Constantinian Officials," *ITQ,* vol. 67 (2002), pp. 195–223, has examined the careers of Acacius, Strategius, and Dionysius as counts and provincial officials late in the reign of Constantine. Athan., *Festal Index* 4, Libanius, *Or* XLII. 23, Eunapius, *Vita Soph* VI, and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 40. 3, are ancient literary sources for Ablabius; while *Codex Theod* XI. 27. 1 (329), XVI. 8. 2 (330), V. 9 (331), VII. 22. 5 (333), and *Const Sirm* 1 (333), are some of the laws addressed to him. For the details of his life and career, and other references thereto, see: *PLRE,* vol. I, pp. 3–4 (Fl. Ablabius 4); and Barnes, *New Empire,* p. 132; and for his role in the death of Sopater, cf. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 252–53, and Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* p. 265.

9 The mints Constantine was using between 330–37 were: Trier, Arles, Rome, Aquileia, Siscia, Thessalonica, Heraclea, Constantinople, Nicomedia, Cyzicus, Antioch, and Alexandria. For the organization and officials in the regional mints, consult: Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, pp. 22–24. For listings of the Christian symbols on the Arles, Aquileia, and Antioch coins between 334 and 337, see: Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, pp. 274–77 (Arles), 407 (Aquileia), and 695 (Antioch); and R.A.G.Carson, P.V.Hill, and J.P.C.Kent, *Late Rome Bronze Coinage, A.D. 324–498* (London, 1972), pp. 10–11 (Arles), and 17 (Aquileia). And for analytical studies on the use of these Christian symbols as control marks on the coins of Constantine, consult: Bruun, "The Christian Signs on the Coins of Constantine," pp. 24–25, and 29–31; Bastien, "Le chrisme dans la numismatique de la dynastie constantinienne," p. 114; and Odahl, "Christian Symbols in Military Motifs on Constantine's Coinage," pp. 70–71—with excellent illustrations in the latter.

10 The public letter "Against the Heretics" was described and recorded by Euseb., in *Vita Const* III. 63–66, and dates to the winter of 324–25; the constitution *De Haereticis* was preserved in *Codex Theod* XVI. 5.1, and dates to 1 September 326. Eusebius commented in *Vita Const* III. 66 how some heretics "crept secretly back into the Church" as a result of this imperial pressure. Constantine exempted one group from this legislation—the Novatianists. He discovered that their theology was orthodox (indeed, their founder Novatian had helped to formulate the doctrine of the Trinity in the mid-third century), and that their ethics were exemplary (he may have wanted the prayers of such people after the family tragedy in Italy). Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 10, and Soz., *Hist Eccl* I. 22, recorded the emperor's examination of their leader Acesius at Nicaea; and *Codex Theod* XVI. 5. 2 (25 September 326), allowed them to hold meetings and possess communal property. For modern commentary on these issues, see: Gaudemet, "La legislation religieuse de Constantin," pp. 60–61; Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 200, and 204; Dörries, *Constantine,* pp. 204–5; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 224–25; and Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 138–40.

11 The limitation on visits by Jews to Jerusalem was recorded in the *Itin Burd* 591; the legal restrictions on Jews were listed in Euseb., *Vita Const* IV. 27, and in *Codex Theod* XVI. 8. 1–6, and 9. 1–2; and the Count Joseph story was told by Epiphanius, in *Panarion* 30. 4. For modern analyses of Constantine's treatment of the Jews, consult: Gaudemet, "La legislation religieuse de Constantin," pp. 54–60; Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 180–81; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 252; and the recent book by James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews, A History* (Boston, MA, 2001).

12 Euseb., in *Oratio de Laudibus Constantini* 8, and in *Vita Const* III. 54–58 (followed by Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 18, and Soz., *Hist Eccl* II. 5); and Zos., *Hist Nova* 11. 30–31, detailed and commented on the policy of Constantine of dismantling and degrading pagan shrines in the later years of his reign. *Vita Const* IV. 37–39 recorded a number of communities which converted to Christianity; and *ILS* 705 preserved the Hispellum decree. The outlawing of pagan sacrifices Eusebius mentioned in *Vita Const* II. 45, IV. 23, and 25, probably meant the burning of animal victims on altars, not a total closing of all pagan temples. For modern views, see: Gaudemet, "La legislation religieuse de Constantin," pp. 48–54; Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 173–76; and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 211–12, and 245–48.

13 T.D.Barnes, "Emperor and Bishops, A.D. 324–344: Some Problems," *AJAH,* vol. 3 (1978), pp. 53–75, provided a detailed chronology for the ecclesiastical disputes of Constantine's later years. The ancient sources treating the initial attempts of Constantine and Eusebius to get Arius readmitted to the church in Alexandria, and the refusals of Alexander and Athanasius were: Athanasius, *Apologia contra Arianos* 6, and 59–60; Phil., *Hist Eccl* II. 11; Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 27; Soz., *Hist Eccl* II. 17 and 18; and Theod., *Hist Eccl* I. 25. For modern scholarship on this topic, consult: Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 151–54; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 230–31; Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine of God,* pp. 246–52; Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 271–76; and Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God,* pp. 103–7.

14 Athanasius, Philostorgius, and the Church historians of late antiquity were in general agreement that Eusebius of Nicomedia was the leader of the Arian revival and Athanasius the defender of Nicene orthodoxy in the mid-fourth-century Church. Modern scholarship in recent decades has offered a more critical assessment of the often tendentious writings of Athanasius and a less heroic portrait of the Alexandrian Bishop than was presented by Church historians in earlier ages—see Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine of God,* and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* and *Athanasius and Constantius,* for this; and Duane Wade-Hampton Arnold, *The Early Episcopal Career of Athanasius of Alexandria* (Notre Dame, 1991), for a more sympathetic portrait.

15 Ancient sources for the alliance of Eusebius and the Melitians and their initial attacks on Athanasius in 330–32 were: Athan., *Apol con Arianos* 59–62; Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 27; Soz., *Hist Eccl* II. 22; and Theod., *Hist Eccl* I. 25; and for the Donatist problem in Numidia in 329–30 were: Optatus, *App* 10; and *Codex Theod* XVI. 2.1. For modern commentary, consult: Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 154–56; Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 151–52; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 231–32; Arnold, *Early Episcopal Career of Athanasius,* pp. 104–18; Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius,* pp. 20–21; Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 276–77; Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God,* pp. 110–12; and Frend, *Donatist Church,* pp. 162–63.

16 For the literary sources, see: *Origo* 6. 31: "Deinde adversum Gothos bellum suscepit et implorantibus Sarmatis auxilium tulit. Ita per Constantinum Caesarem centum prope milia fame et frigore extincta sunt. Tunc et obsides accepit, inter quos Ariarici regis filium"; Euseb., *Vita Const* IV. 5; Eutrop., *Brev* X. 7; and the *Consularia Constantinopolitana,* year 332; and for the epigraphic and numismatic data, see: Barnes, "Victories of Constantine," pp. 150–54, and *New Empire,* p. 79; and Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, pp. 579–81, and *passim*. For modern analyses, consult: Grant, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 59–61; and Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* p. 254.

17 The "Epistle of Victor Constantine Maximus Augustus to the Bishops and People of Egypt" was recorded in Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 9, while the harsh "Epistle of Constantine Augustus to Arius and to Arians" was preserved in Gel., *Hist Eccl* III. 19 (both *ca.* 333). For this episode, see: Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 232–33; Williams, *Arius,* pp. 76–78; Arnold, *Early Episcopal Career of Athanasius,* pp. 118–26; Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 278–84; and Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God,* pp. 112–15.

18 *Apol con Arianos* 63–70 contains Athanasius' account of the charges leveled against him in 333–34 and key documents surrounding the Council of Caesarea; cf. Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 27, Soz., *Hist Eccl* II. 23, and Theod., *Hist Eccl* I. 26. For modern reconstructions, consult: Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 233–35; Arnold, *Early Episcopal Career of Athanasius,* pp. 126–42; Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius,* pp. 21–22; Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 285–88; and Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God,* pp. 119–22.

19 *Origo* 6. 32 reported the operation briefly; and Euseb., *Vita Const* IV. 6 commented on it at greater length. For the new victory title, see: Barnes, "Victories of Constantine," pp. 150–54; and for the contemporary coins, see: Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, *passim,* for the years 334–36. MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 146–49, and Grant, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 61–68, offer solid modern accounts of Constantine's campaigns along the Danube.

20 Euseb., *Vita Const* IV. 40–41, and Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 28, connected the wish of Constantine to purify the clergy of dissension at Tyre with his plan to dedicate the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem in 335. Athan., *Apol con Arianos* 71, presented Eusebius of Nicomedia as being behind the renewed attacks; while Soz., *Hist Eccl* II. 25, provided a list of the charges against the Bishop of Alexandria. Euseb., *Vita Const* IV. 42, and Theod., *Hist Eccl* I. 27, recorded the "Epistle of the Emperor Constantine to the Holy Council at Tyre." Concerning the background to the Council of Tyre, consult: Jones, *Constantine,* p. 160; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 235; Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine of God,* pp. 255–59; Arnold, *Early Episcopal Career of Athanasius,* pp. 143–48; Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius,* p. 22; Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 289–91; and Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God,* pp. 122–23.

21 Soz., *Hist Eccl* II. 25, provided the most reliable narrative of the proceedings at the Council of Tyre; while Athan., in *Apol con Arianos,* 71–83, offered his own account of the council, and preserved key documents pertaining thereto; cf. Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 29–31, Theod., *Hist Eccl* I. 28, and Phil., *Hist Eccl* II. 11. For modern reconstructions, see: Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 161–63; Dörries, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 152–53; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 236–38; Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine of God,* pp. 259–61; Arnold, *Early Episcopal Career of Athanasius,* pp. 148–57; Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius,* pp. 22–23; Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 291–96; and Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God,* pp. 122–24.

22 Euseb., in *Vita Const* IV. 43–47, recorded eyewitness testimony concerning the Encaenia festival of the Holy Sepulchre complex; cf. the later accounts of Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 33; Soz., *Hist Eccl* II. 26; and Theod., *Hist Eccl* I. 29. The oration which Eusebius gave about the complex in Jerusalem in September and in Constantinople in November 335 was subsequently divided, with the physical description part inserted by Eusebius himself into *Vita Const* III. 33–40, and the spiritual meaning part attached mistakenly by his editor as chapters 11–18 of the *Oratio de Laudibus Constantini,* a separate speech which Eusebius delivered as a panegyric in honor of the Tricennalia of Constantine in Constantinople in July 336. For a description of the original Holy Sepulchre complex and ancient and modern references thereto, consult: Ch. VIII above; and for the textual transmission of the *Oratio de Sepulchro Christi,* see: H.A.Drake, *In Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius' Tricennial Orations* (Berkeley, 1975), pp. 30–45. Athan., *Apol con Arianos* 84, Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 33, and Soz., *Hist Eccl* II. 27, recorded the Council of Jerusalem decision in favor of Arius and his fellows. For modern commentary on the Encaenia and the Council of Jerusalem, consult: Matthew Black, "The Festival of the Encaenia Ecclesiae in the Ancient Church with Special Reference to Palestine and Syria," *JEH,* vol. 5 (1954), pp. 78–85; Michael Fraser, "Constantine and the Encaenia," *Studia Patristica,* vol. 29 (1997), pp. 25–28; Jones, *Constantine,* p. 164; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 238–39; and Williams, *Arius,* pp. 78–79.

23 Athan., in *Apol con Arianos* 27–28, 37–40, 72–76, 82–83, and 85, recorded various documents relevant to the commission of inquiry and the actions of the Council of Tyre;

Soz., in *Hist Eccl* II. 25, provided a narrative account of the council and listed the grounds for the deposition of Athanasius. Barnes, in *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 239, and *Athanasius and Constantius,* p. 23, Arnold, in *Early Episcopal Career of Athanasius,* pp. 157–63, Rubenstein, in *When Jesus Became God,* pp. 124–25, and Drake, in *Constantine and the Bishops,* p. 310, all see the final actions of the Council of Tyre taking place after the Jerusalem Encaenia in the fall of 335.

24 Athan., in *Festal Index* 8, and *Apol con Arianos* 86 and 87, recounted his flight from Tyre to Constantinople and gave the names of the bishops who followed him; Constantine himself, in the epistle he dispatched to the bishops at Tyre, described the scene in which Athanasius accosted him in Constantinople—the imperial letter was recorded with slight variations in Athan., *Apol con Arianos* 86, in Gel., *Hist Eccl* III. 18, in Soc, *Hist Eccl* I. 24, and in Soz., *Hist Eccl* II. 28. For some of the tangled modern scholarship on these events, see: Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 239–40, and *Athanasius and Constantius,* pp. 23–24, who, on the basis of law subscriptions, has Constantine entering Constantinople too late (6 Nov.); Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 297–305, who, due to differences between the Athanasian and Gelasian versions of the epistle of Constantine, labels it a forgery; Arnold, *Early Episcopal Career of Athanasius,* pp. 163–70, who reviews and cites much of the modern work on these topics, and emphasizes the anger of the emperor; and H.A.Drake, "Athanasius' First Exile," *GRBS,* vol. 27, 2 (1986), pp. 193–204, and *Constantine and the Bishops,* pp. 309–15, who offers what seems to be the most accurate dating and reconstruction of these events.

25 Athan., in *Festal Index* 8, and *Apol con Arianos* 87, emphasized the plots of his enemies and their charge of his threat to halt grain shipments for Constantinople as pivotal in the decision of Constantine to exile him to Trier; Soc., in *Hist Eccl* I. 25, and Soz., in *Hist Eccl* II. 28, also stressed the hope of the emperor that the exile of Athanasius might bring unity to the Church; cf. Theod., *Hist Eccl* I. 29. On the exile of Athanasius, consult: Drake, "Athanasius' First Exile"; and Arnold, *Early Episcopal Career of Athanasius,* pp. 163–73. Earlier scholars, like Jones, in *Constantine,* pp. 165–67, and MacMullen, in *Constantine,* pp. 179–83, saw inconsistency in the internal ecclesiastical policy of Constantine; while recent scholars, such as Barnes, in *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 240–44, Elliott, in *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 319–20, and Drake, in *Constantine and the Bishops,* pp. 312–15, have seen more consistency in his policy as argued here.

26 For the relationship of Eusebius of Caesarea to Arius and his role at the Nicene Council, see Ch. VII above; for his help to Helena in the Holy Land, see Ch. VIII above; and for his role in the deposition of Eustathius of Antioch, see Ch. IX above. Euseb., *Vita Const* IV. 36–37, recorded the imperial request for Bibles for Constantinople; *Vita Const* IV. 34–35, dealt with the Easter treatise Eusebius sent to the emperor; and *Vita Const* IV. 33 and 46, reported on the *Oratio de Sepulchro Christi* offered before Constantine in Constantinople. Cf. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 249–50, 253–54, and 266–71; and Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops,* pp. 367–75.

27 For the ancient literary sources, see: *Origo* 6. 34=Oros., *Hist* VII. 28. 29: "Mox Gothorum fortissimas et copiosissimas gentes in ipso barbarici soli sinu… delevit"; Vict., *Caes* 41. 13; Eutrop., *Brev* X. 7; and Fest., *Brev* 26: "de Gothis victoria gloriosior." For the victory titulature and the coins, consult: Barnes, "Victories of Constantine," pp. 150–54; and Bruun, *RIC,* vol. VII, p. 221, # 578 (Trier); p. 342, # 373 (Rome); and p. 585, # 107 (Constantinople). For modern comments, see: Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 250; Grant, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 58–63; and Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 254–55.

28 Euseb., *Contra Marcellum,* quoted selections from the lost tract of Marcellus; while Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 36, and Soz., *Hist Eccl* II. 33, recorded his trial and exile. For modern reconstructions, consult: Barnes, "Emperor and Bishops," pp. 64–65, and *Constantine and*

Eusebius, pp. 240–42; Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine of God,* pp. 217–18; Williams, *Arius,* pp. 79–80; and Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God,* pp. 132–34.

29 Macarius, a priest loyal to Athanasius, seems to have been in Constantinople when Arius died, and to have communicated the story by letter or messenger to his exiled bishop in the west. Athanasius, in his *Epistola ad Serapionem de Morte Arii* 2–4, and in his *Epistola Encyclica ad Episcopos Aegypti et Libyae* 18 and 19, reported the story to his supporters in Egypt. Cf. Ruf., *Hist Eccl* I. 13–14; Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 37–38; and Soz., *Hist Eccl* II. 29–30—Socrates noted that the spot where Arius died was still being pointed out a century later. Hanson, in *Search for the Christian Doctrine of God,* p. 265, and Elliott, in *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 322–23, express doubts about the validity of the story; while Jones, in *Constantine,* p. 167, Barnes, in *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 242, Rubenstein, in *When Jesus Became God,* pp. 134–39, and Williams, in *Arius,* pp. 80–81, accept it as truthful.

30 *Origo* 6. 35, Vict., *Epitome* 41. 20, and Zos., *Hist Nova* II. 39, were the most explicit ancient sources for Constantine's succession plan and territorial divisions of the empire; cf. Vict., *Caes* 41. 6–15, Eutrop., *Brev* X. 9, and Oros., *Hist* VII. 29. 1, who recorded the names, but not the domains of Constantine's heirs; Euseb., *Vita Const* IV. 40 and 51, mentioned the three sons of Constantine, their religious training, and the general areas they were to inherit, but left out any mention of his nephews who were killed shortly after Constantine's death in 337; cf. Soc. *Hist Eccl* I. 39, Soz., *Hist Eccl* II. 34, Theod., *Hist Eccl* I. 30. For the half-siblings of Constantine from Constantius and Theodora, see again: Barnes, *New Empire,* p. 37, and the relevant listings in *PLRE,* vol. I; and for other modern accounts of the succession plan, consult: MacMullen, *Constantine,* pp. 217–20; and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 251–52.

31 Euseb., in *Vita Const* IV. 7, 46, and 48–50, recorded some of the events, and commented on the crowds in the capital for the *Tricennalia.* Barnes, in *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 253–55, reconstructs the festival and the key part played by Eusebius within it.

32 Euseb., *Oratio de Laudibus Constantini* Prologue.

33 Euseb., *Orat de Laud Const* 1–5: "τὸ μίμημα τῆς μοναρχικῆς ἐξουσίας" =Constantine's Christian empire is "the [earthly] copy of the heavenly monarchy"—5).

34 Euseb., *Orat de Laud Const* 6–10: "τις ὑποφήτης τοῦ παμβασιλέως θεοῦ" = Constantine is "an interpreter of the Almighty God"—10).

35 For some of the abundant modern scholarship on the Eusebian *Oratio de Laudibus Constantini,* see: H.A.Drake, "When was the *De Laudibus Constantini* Delivered?" *Historia,* vol. 24 (1975), pp. 345–56; Baynes, "Eusebius and the Christian Empire," *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays,* pp. 168–72; Setton, *Christian Attitude Towards the Emperor in the Fourth Century,* pp. 40–56; S.L.Greenslade, *Church and State from Constantine to Theodosius* (London, 1954), pp. 10–12; Dwornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy,* vol. II, pp. 611–58; Sansterre, "Eusèbe de Césarée et la naissance de la théorie césaropapiste'," pp. 131–95, and 532–94; Drake, *In Praise of Constantine,* pp. 46–79; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 253–55; and Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire,* pp. 53–65.

Notes to Chapter XI

1 Eusebius of Caesarea provided the most detailed account of the final activities of Constantine during the last ten months of his reign—his pious Christian actions, his construction of the Church of the Holy Apostles for his final resting place, his plans for a Persian war, and his baptism, death, and burial in Constantinople. Other bits of information on these topics, such as the place of his death, his age at the time of his demise, etc., were recorded by other

ancient historians. Coins and archaeological data also offer useful evidence. All the modern biographers of Constantine have had to deal with these topics as well, with Jones, in *Constantine,* pp. 195–200, and Barnes, in *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 258–60, providing particularly helpful summaries. Again, see Barnes, *New Empire,* p. 80, for a chart on the "Imperial Residences and Journeys" of Constantine during his final months in 336–37.

2 Material which is largely found in Book IV of the *Vita Const*—so the plausible arguments of Drake, in "What Eusebius Knew: The Genesis of the *Vita Constantini*"

3 In *Vita Const* IV. 55, Eusebius reported on the habitual speech-making of Constantine; in IV. 29, he described the usual format and content of imperial discourses; and in IV. 32, he indicated his intention to attach the oration "To the Assembly of Saints" to the *Vita Const.*

4 *Oratio ad Coet Sanct* 1–2 contained the prologue; 3–10 the first section on the philosophical superiority of Christianity; 11–21 the second section on the coming of Christ and the way of righteousness; 22–25 the third section on the lessons of recent history; and 26 the epilogue or peroration on the holy service and faith of the emperor. Euseb., in *Vita Const* IV. 29, characterized Constantine as a philosopher. Debate on the date and place this imperial oration was delivered has long raged among scholars, with April of 325 in Nicomedia recently gaining ground. For some recent stages in this debate, consult: S.Mazzarino, "La data dell' *Oratio ad sanctorum coetum*" *Antico, tardantico ed èra costantiniana,* vol. I (Rome, 1974), pp. 99–116; T.D.Barnes, "The Emperor Constantine's Good Friday Sermon," *JTS,* n.s., vol. 27 (1976), pp. 414–23, and *Constantine and Eusebius* (1981), p. 73; H.A.Drake, "Suggestions of Date in Constantine's *Oration to the Saints*" *AJP,* vol. 106 (1985), pp. 335–49; Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (1987), pp. 627–35; Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine* (1996), pp. 186–87; Bruno Bleckmann, "Ein Kaiser als Prediger: Zur Datierung der konstantinischen 'Rede an die Versammlung der Heiligen'," *Hermes,* vol. 125 (1997), pp. 183–202; and T.D.Barnes, "Constantine's Speech to the Assembly of Saints: Place and Date of Delivery," *JTS,* n.s., vol. 52, 1 (2001), pp. 26–36. Useful modern analyses of the quite varied elements in its contents can be found in: A.Kurfess, "Kaiser Konstantin und die Sibylle," *Theologische Quartalschrift,* vol. 117 (1936), pp. 11–26, and "Vergils Vierte Ekloge in Kaiser Konstantins 'Rede an die Heilige Versammlung'," *Jahreberichte des Philologischen Vereins zu Berlin,* vol. 64 (1920), pp. 90–96; Daniel de Decker, "Le 'Discours a l'assemblée des saints' attribué a Constantin et l'œuvre de Lactance," *Lactance et son temps: recherches actuelles,* J.Fontaine and M.Perrin, eds. Paris, 1978, pp. 75–87; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 73–76; Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians,* pp. 643–53; H.A.Drake, "Policy and Belief in Constantine's 'Oration to the Saints'," *Studia Patristica,* vol. 19 (1989), pp. 43–51, and "Constantine and Consensus," *CH,* vol. 64, 1 (1995), pp. 1–15; Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 187–93; and Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops,* pp. 292–305.

5 Euseb., in *Vita Const* IV. 58 and 59, provided the most detailed ancient description of the original Church of the Holy Apostles and its plaza and porticoes; and, in IV. 60, reported on the dual purpose of the emperor in constructing it; cf. Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 16 and 40; and Soz., *Hist Eccl* II. 34. For modern reconstructions, see: Glanville Downey, "The Builder of the Original Church of the Apostles at Constantinople," *DOP,* No. 6 (1951), pp. 53–80; and Richard Krautheimer, "Zu Konstantins Apostelkirche," *Mullus: Festschrift T.Klauser. Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* (Münster, 1964), pp. 224–29. Both of these earlier works are now superseded by Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals,* pp. 56–60, and *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture,* pp. 69–70, where the best modern reconstructions of the first Constantinian church are found; Leeb, in *Konstantin und Christus,* pp. 93–120, largely follows Krautheimer, but overemphasizes how Constantine saw himself as Christ's deputy, and a soteriological *imitatio* for him on earth. Barnes, in *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 259, and Pohlsander, in *The Emperor Constantine,* p. 76, emphasize the emperor's wish to be associated with the Apostles, as does Drake, in *Constantine and the Bishops,* pp. 307–8, and 377, who also makes the parallel between Paul and Constantine. For the mid-fourth-

century imperial mausoleum, consult: C.Mango, "Constantine's Mausoleum and the Translation of Relics," *BZ,* vol. 83 (1990), pp. 51–61.

6 Euseb., in *Vita Const* IV. 8, described the envoys from Persia, and the exchange of gifts and alliance between Constantine and Shapur, and in IV. 9–13, transcribed the "Epistle of Constantine the Augustus to Shapur, King of the Persians"; cf. Soz., who in *Hist Eccl* II. 6, described the spread of Christianity outside of the Roman Empire, and in II. 25, repeated the Eusebian data on the letter of Constantine to Shapur. For the imperial letter, and the status of Christians in Sassanian Persia in the late third and fourth centuries, see: Miriam Raub Vivian, "Eusebius and Constantine's Letter to Shapur: Its Place in the *Vita Constantini,*" *Studia Patristica,* vol. 29 (1997), pp. 164–69; Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia,* pp. 200–5; and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 258–59.

7 The most helpful ancient sources for this account of the plans of Constantine for the Persian campaign were: Euseb., *Vita Const* IV. 56–57, and 62; *Origo* 6. 35; Vict., *Caes* 41. 16; Libanius, *Oratio* 59. 59–72; Julian, *Oratio* 1. 18; Eutrop., *Brev* X. 8; Fest., *Brev* 26; Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 18; and Aphrahat, *Demonstratio* 5. For useful modern reconstructions, consult: Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 259, and "Constantine and the Christians of Persia," *JRS,* vol. 75 (1985), pp. 126–36; and Garth Fowden, "The Last Days of Constantine: Oppositional Versions and Their Influence," *JRS,* vol. 84 (1994), esp. pp. 146–53.

8 Euseb., *Vita Const* IV. 61–64, offered the most detailed account (and the quotations in the text) on the last days, baptism and death of Constantine. Soc., *Hist Eccl* I. 40, provided the specific date of 22 May for his demise; while Soz., *Hist Eccl* II. 34, reported that the emperor had entered "the sixty-fifth year of his life," and "the thirty-first year of his reign"—see Ch. II, notes 2–4 above, for the ancient sources and modern scholarship I have employed in placing his birthday on 27 February 273, making him just over 64 when he died. Several of the secular narrative sources, such as *Origo* 6. 35, Vict., *Caes* 41. 16, Eutrop., *Brev* X. 8, Jerome, *Chron* 337, and Oros., *Hist* VII. 28. 31, indicated that the emperor had started out on the Persian campaign when he fell ill and died in a *"villa publica"* which was called *"Achyrona"* or *"Acyrone,"* near Nicomedia. Some recent scholarship has suggested that Eusebius and the Church historians deemphasized or ignored the starting of the Persian campaign (Fowden) and the precise place of Constantine's passing (Woods) out of embarrassment for the unexpected and humble circumstances of his death (Woods has posited that "Achyrona" may not even be a place name, but rather a Latin transliteration for the Greek word "achuron" ("chaffhouse"), and that Constantine was baptized and died in a state-owned grain warehouse). Whatever the circumstances of Constantine's demise, his final words as passed on by Eusebius of Nicomedia to Eusebius of Caesarea reveal that he died in a state of grace, and was looking forward to his heavenly reward. For modern accounts of his last days, baptism, and death, see: Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 195–200; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* pp. 259–60; Grant, *Constantine the Great,* pp. 211–14; Fowden, "The Last Days of Constantine," pp. 146–70; Elliott, *Christianity of Constantine,* pp. 325–26; David Woods, "Where Did Constantine Die," *JTS,* n.s., vol. 48 (1997), pp. 531–35; and Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops,* pp. 307–8.

9 Eusebius, who was probably in Constantinople in June of 337, in *Vita Const* IV. 65–71, left the most detailed account of the display of Constantine's body in the palace, the cortege led by his son to the Church of the Apostles, and the funeral for and entombment of the emperor therein. The later Church historians, e.g., Soc., in *Hist Eccl* I. 40, Soz., in *Hist Eccl* II. 34, and Theod., in *Hist Eccl* I. 32, provided shorter accounts largely based on Eusebius. The *consecratio* coins were described by Eusebius in *Vita Const* IV. 73, and were issued from the mints of Trier, Lyon, Heraclea, and Constantinople in Europe, and the mints of Cyzicus, Nicomedia, Antioch and Alexandria in the Orient—see Carson, Hill, and Kent, *Late Roman Bronze Coinage,* pp. 5–35, and Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire,* pp. 175–78, for mint listings of the *consecratio* coins. For modern accounts of the funeral, consult: Jones, *Constantine,* pp. 195–96; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 261; and Grant, *Constantine*

the Great, pp. 213–15. For analyses of the consecration coins, see: Patrick Bruun, "The Consecration Coins of Constantine the Great," *Arctos,* n.s., vol. 1 (1954), pp. 19–31; L.Koep, "Die Konsekrationsmünzen Kaiser Konstantins und ihre religionspolitische *Bedeutung,*" *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum,* vol. 1 (1958), pp. 94–104; Kenneth A.Jacob, *Coins and Christianity* (London, 1959), p. 25; Alföldi, *Conversion of Constantine,* pp. 34–35, and 117; Odahl, "Constantinian Coin Motifs in Ancient Literary Sources," pp. 6–7; and Grant, *Constantine the Great,* p. 215. A part of the porphyry sarcophagus of Constantine is extant in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, and the consecration coins are available in museums and on the antiquities market.

10 This brief summary of the years from 337 to 395 cannot do justice to the complexity of the period, but will offer the reader hints on some key names and themes for further study. For the ancient sources, one can start in the central books of the ecclesiastical histories of Socrates and Sozomenus, and the later portions of the pagan epitomes of Victor, Eutropius, and Zosimus; and then go on to the great history of Ammianus Marcellinus and the works of the fourth-century Church Fathers. For modern treatments, the general works of Downey, *Late Roman Empire,* and Cameron, *Later Roman Empire,* offer useful summaries; for more detailed studies, see: Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius;* G.W.Bowersock, *Julian the Apostate* (Cambridge, MA, 1978); Stephen Williams and Gerard Friell, *Theodosius: The Empire at Bay* (New Haven, CT, 1994); Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine of God;* Palanque, *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire;* Markus, *Christianity in the Roman World;* MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire;* Charles Norris Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture* (Oxford, 1944; rept. New York, 1972); Edward Kennard Rand, *Founders of the Middle Ages* (New York, 1928; rept. New York, 1957); and Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture: The Metamorphosis of Theology in the Christian Encounter with Hellenism* (New Haven, CT, 1993—reviewed by Charles Odahl in *AncW,* vol. 26 (1995), pp. 258–59).

Notes to Chapter XII

1 For the history of late antiquity, the Byzantine Empire and Medieval Europe, consult: Garth Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ, 1993); Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries* (New Haven, CT, 1997); *The Oxford History of Byzantium,* ed. by Cyril Mango (Oxford, 2002); and Brian Tierney, *Western Europe in the Middle Ages,* 6th ed. (New York, 1999).

2 Although simplified and incomplete, this list offers hints of the lasting legacy of Constantine in history.

3 The tenth-century Constantinople mosaic in the Vestibule of the Warriors at Hagia Sophia depicting Constantine and Justinian presenting models of the city and its domed cathedral to the Virgin and Child offers an idealized image of Constantine as the model Byzantine emperor. The thirteenth-century Roman series of frescoes in the Chapel of St. Sylvester attached to the Church of Santi Quattro Coronati showing Constantine being baptized by the pope and granting him imperial powers reveals the fictional image of Constantine as the obedient son of the popes. For Byzantine and medieval views and legends concerning Constantine and Helena, see the two volumes by Samuel N.C.Lieu and Dominic Montserrat, eds., *From Constantine to Julian: Pagan and Byzantine Views,* and *Constantine: History, Historiography, and Legend* (New York, 1998); and the book by Pohlsander, *Helena: Empress and Saint*.

4 Löwenklau's views are found in a preface he wrote for a Latin translation of the *Historia Nova* of Zosimus he published in 1576, and was entitled *Apologia pro Zosimo adversus*

Evagrii, Nicephori Callisti et aliorum acerbas criminationes—listed in the *British Museum Catalogue of Printed Books* 263 (London, 1966); those of Baronius are expressed in the *Annales Ecclesiastici,* vol. 3 (Antwerp, 1623); and Gibbon's portrait is in Chapter XVIII of his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*—pp. 325ff. of the Frank C.Bourne edition (New York, 1963).

5 John W.Eadie, in *The Conversion of Constantine* (New York, 1971), offered excerpts from the more prominent writers in each of the "political pragmatist," the "pagan syncretist," and the "Christian convert" schools of thought from Burkhardt to MacMullen; and in my "Constantine's Conversion to Christianity," in *Problems in European History* (Durham, 1979), pp. 1–18, I summarized and analyzed these schools of thought, and supported the genuine conversion view with a detailed analysis of the literary and numismatic materials.

6 *Constantine and Eusebius* (1981) and *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (1982)—my appreciation of these works can be seen by the frequent references to them in the notes above.

7 *Constantine and Eusebius,* p. 275.

8 Since the works of Barnes, several biographical studies of Constantine have appeared. The short works of Bruno Bleckmann, *Konstantin der Grosse* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1996), and Hans Pohlsander, *The Emperor Constantine* (1996), provide useful introductions to the subject for students. Four longer studies are quite varied in value and character. Michael Grant's *Constantine the Great* (1994) is marred by poor organization, factual errors, and an unclear assessment of the emperor; and D.G.Kousoulas' *The Life and Times of Constantine the Great* (Danbury, CT, 1997) mixes Byzantine legends with historical reality, and also makes too many factual errors—neither can be recommended. T.G.Elliott's *Christianity of Constantine* (1996), and H.A.Drake's *Constantine and the Bishops* (2000) are both serious studies and have wonderful insights here and there; however, Elliott starts from an untenable premise (that Constantine was raised as a Christian) and does not use any of the material sources; and Drake has a confusing organizational format, leaves out much relevant data (the years 314–24, for instance), and includes too many modern anachronistic comparisons. Both can be recommended, but with reservations. For other recent specialized studies, see the Bibliography below.

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* Other pre-Constantinian sources (e.g., Pliny the Elder, Tertullian, Origen, and the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*) and post-Constantinian sources (e.g., Jerome, Augustine, Gelasius, and the *Epitome Historiarum* of Zonaras), which offer bits of evidence relevant to this study are cited in the endnotes. The "genres" in the above list of sources are by no means precise or exclusive—the *Vita Constantini* is as much panegyrical as it is biographical; and the *Origo Constantini* is similar to the narrative epitomes; yet, the groupings should aid the reader in comprehending the types of sources available to the historian of late antiquity.

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